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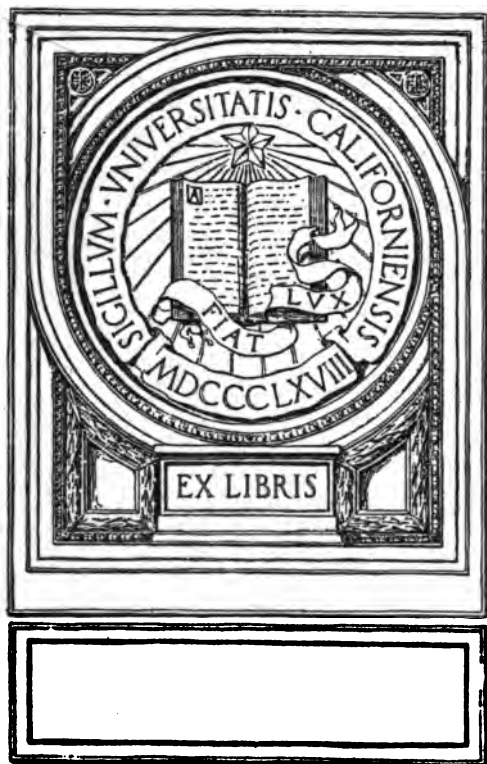
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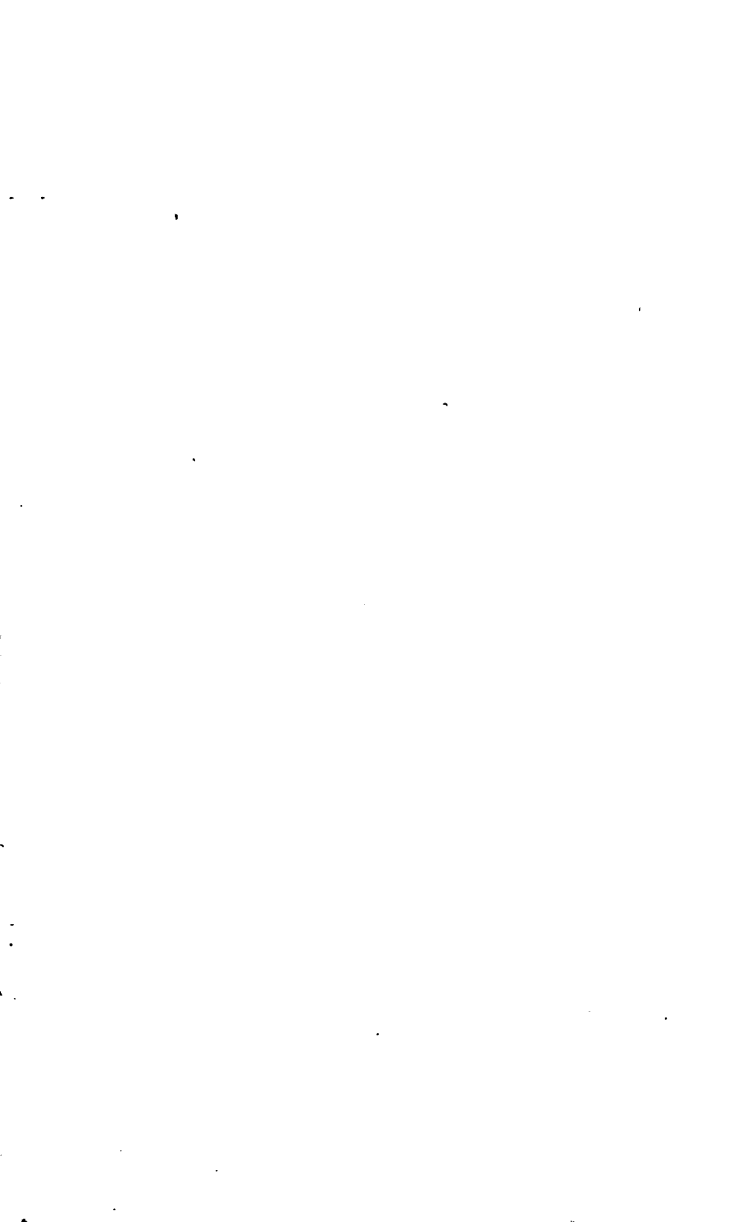
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# TO THE ABORIGINAL



FLED HOWLING INTO THE NORTH

Page 159

# THE GAN'S PROGRESS

By  
GOUVERNEUR MORRIS

Author of  
"Tom Beauling," and "Aladdin O'Brien"

Illustrated by JOHN RAE



New York  
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1904

**HISTORY 1**

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***SEPTEMBER***

**TO THE  
ALABAMA**

# DEDICATION

To M. B. H. and F. B. H.

961  
M876  
pag

Under a wide roof, in the midst of flowers, trees, sunshine, horses, dogs, meat, wine, wit, friendly faces and all good things, whither my affection had brought me at the invitation of yours, this violent story of the Pagan born to darkness, and progressing to the first glimmer of light, was written. But you must do me the further kindness to believe that it is with no thought of squaring accounts that I dedicate it to you. Except in the valvy heart, there is no squaring of accounts among friends: except in that lively organ, there is no bringing of the credits and debits of intercourse to an honest balance and a delicate.

It is my pleasure to owe you far more than I can pay ever. In dedicating this story, it may be that I am adding grossly to that debt. If so, I ask your most lenient consideration. If not, I still ask your consideration — not for the dedication of my Pagan, but for the affection with which he is dedicated. For I believe this: that without affection, the world, Pagan and Christian, would become like unto the tottering moon, “staple in desolation.”

G. M.

266915





## PREFACE

**T**HOSE to whom he had been charitable brought the body of the great hunter to his cave, and laid it within. But first they carried out the clubs and the nets and the fish spears and the war spears, and all that was of use, to be divided among them, for the great hunter would not need such things any more.

## PREFACE

Dissolution--decay--dust--nothing. It was thus that they conceived the end of man.

No brutish face in that hairy circle looked upward ; no eagle eye saw aught but the cadavre, the cave, the weapons and the surrounding forest. The great hunter was dead ; the keen eyes closed, the sensitive ears deaf, the nostrils still.

Bring down the roof of the cave and cover him, close up the mouth of the cave and forget him. He is dead and done for. Give his weapons to those that can use them.

## PREFACE

The great hands are inert; the mighty thighs have lost their springs. He will run no more on any trail. His hunting is over. He has made his last journey to a dark place and a long sleep.

For you, tribesman, a short span wherein to shout the war cry and swing the club, a little sunlight to see by, a few springs of desire, a few rains, a few snows. The longer the better, for after,—all will be at an end. Like the great hunter, insensate and

## PREFACE

unaware, you will lie in the dark for the ages of ages.

Wail, tribeswomen and beat your breasts! You shall bring life into the world, but you shall not take life away.

The sleep of life is a good sleep, for man awakens therefrom happy and refreshed. But from the sleep of death there is no awakening. Man born to light, dies into darkness.

Thus it was in the forest ten million years ago.

## PREFACE

### II

There lies to-day, in the midst of a great house, the body of a man awaiting the last honors which can be rendered to it.

A week ago the doings of that man stirred two countries ; two countries, to-day, are shaken by the news of his death. The hundreds to whom he was good and generous, mourn it ; those who bore him ill-will are shocked by it ; the world regrets it. For all join in remembering that the

## PREFACE

man, human and frail as other men, was still broad, brilliant and fabulous, a choice and master spirit of his age.

There he lies, the great man, in the midst of his earthly treasures. Presently he will be laid in the narrow house, and they will remain behind. Nothing of the man shall go with him out of the world but that which he brought into the world with him. And tho it may be that there is none so presumptuous as to proclaim where and how the

## PREFACE

man shall arise, yet there are few indeed so obstinate as to believe that he has perished utterly.

For we know that all things move onward and upward. The cell became the ape, the ape became the man, and the man shall become—what? That we must not know clearly. But we must know that it will be something above man, and beyond.

Who is so beholden to life as not to look upon the idea of death with comfort? Not to-morrow, but in the course

## PREFACE

of years, services and honors? By all means, when the trumpet calls, let us pass comfortably upward into death. For this death is no descent into darkness, but rather a progress of time and soul; and the body of the barren woman shall be fertile in death, and the soul of the wicked man shall be cleansed. And we that were born to darkness shall die into the light.

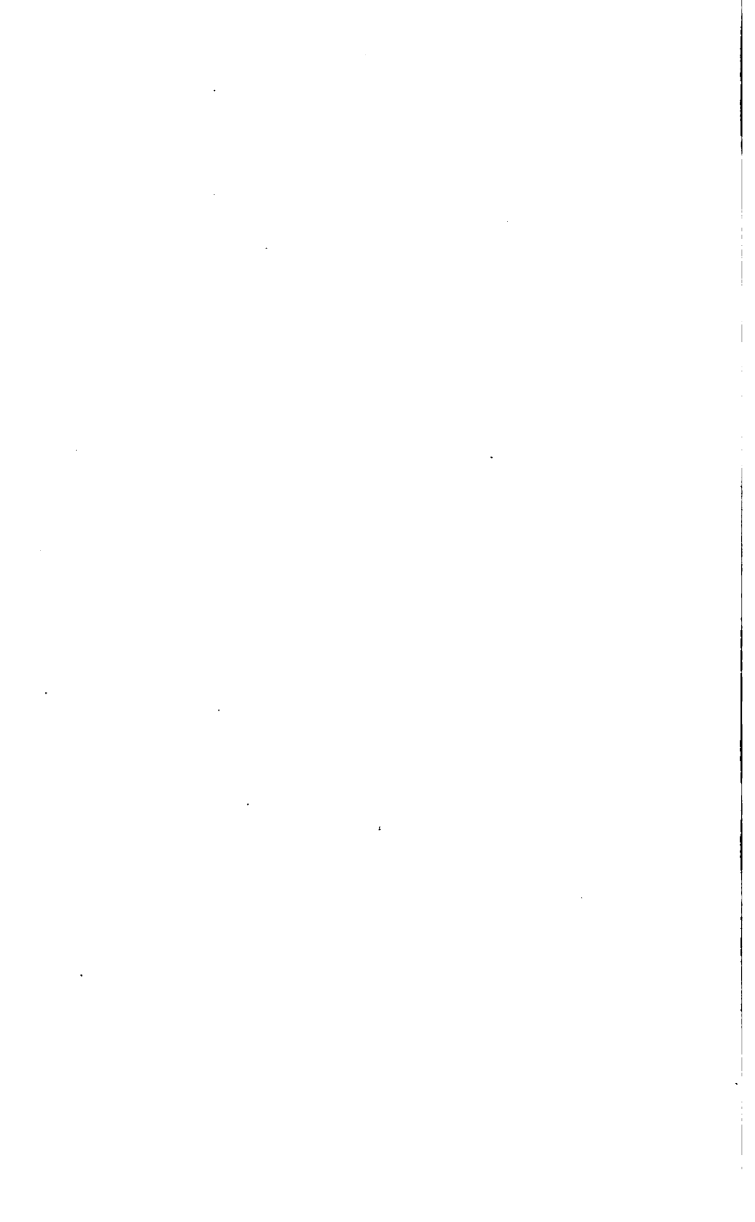
Thus it is to-day after the schooling of the ages.

## PREFACE

### III

Read then, how Sunrise,  
the pagan, was born in the  
dark, and having suffered at  
the hands of death, came to  
see the light glimmering  
beyond, and the life.

G. M.



# CONTENTS



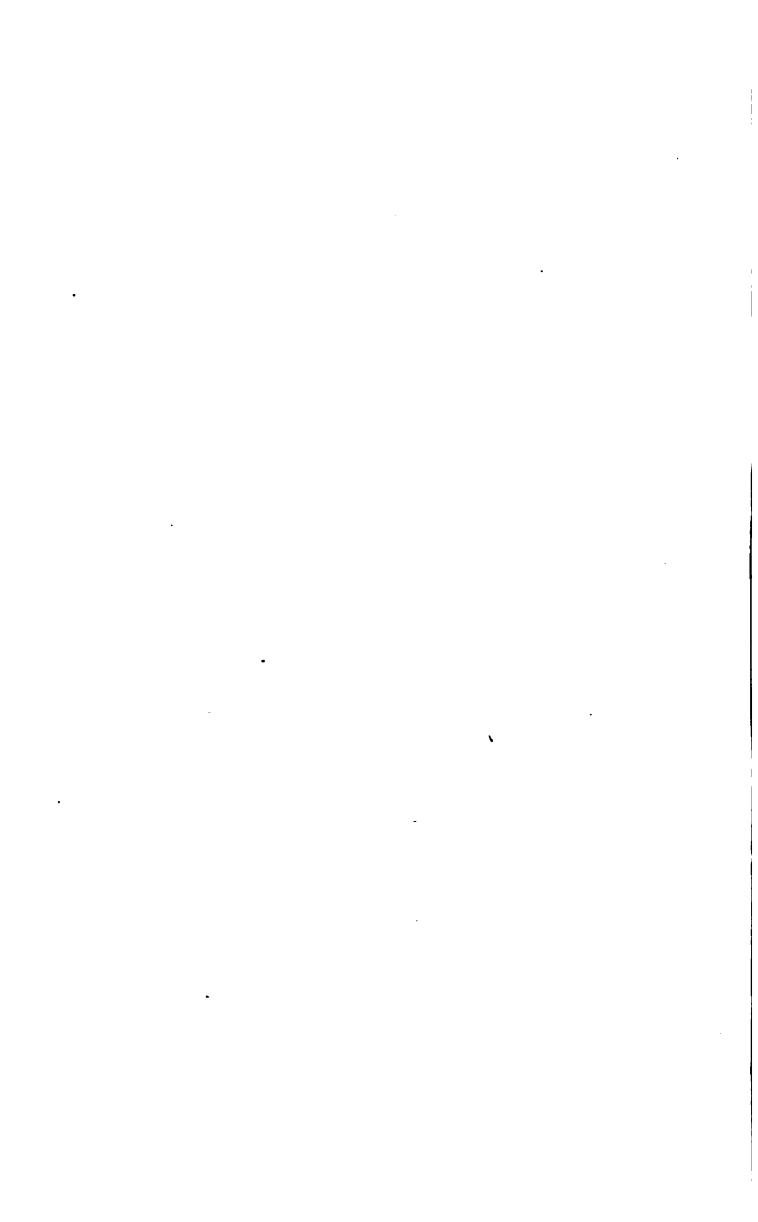
Chapter	Page
I One Eye . . . . .	1
II No Man . . . . .	10
III The Blasted Tree and the Blue Jay	26
IV No Man and No Foot . . . . .	40
V The Moose . . . . .	51
VI She Wolf . . . . .	66
VII The Wooing of She Wolf . . . . .	75
VIII The Faint Heart of No Man . . . . .	90
IX The Birth of Sunrise . . . . .	106
X The Death of No Man . . . . .	111
XI The Passing of Strong Hand . . . . .	121
XII Maku and She Wolf . . . . .	124
XIII The Weakness of Maku . . . . .	134

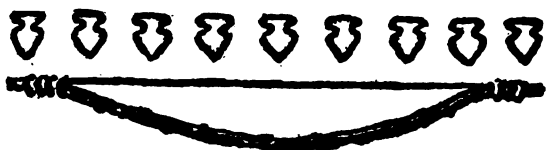
Chapter	Page
XIV Sunrise and Dawn . . .	139
XV Fire! . . . . .	150
XVI The Flight of the Tribe . . .	158
XVII Heat and Cold . . . . .	164
XVIII The Death of One Eye . . .	181
XIX The Courting of Dawn . . .	197
XX Sunrise Digs a Cave . . . . .	207
XXI The Trail of Two . . . . .	218
XXII On the Trail of One . . . . .	230
XXIII The Long Trail . . . . .	244



# ILLUSTRATIONS

Fled Howling into the North	- -	Frontispiece
He Scratched Pictures on Bone	- -	Page 12
Unconquered—Bleeding to Death	- -	“ 59
“Not Till I am Dead”	- - - -	“ 122
The Knitter of Nets	- - - -	“ 185
She Sobbed in His Arms	- - - -	“ 227





## CHAPTER I

### ONE EYE

**O**LD One Eye sat in the mouth of his cave and blinked. Though he blinked both eyes, he could see only out of one of them. Years ago, when One Eye was called Swift Foot, and could run down a deer in the open, the other had been pierced by a thorn and destroyed.

It was wonderful when

## THE PAGAN

you came to look at him, to think that old One Eye ever could have been a swift runner, for his legs were no longer nor bigger than his arms. His body was long, heavily paunched and massive; his head hung forward on his hairy chest and he sat hunched over like an ape.

In truth, One Eye looked very much like an ape. His forehead was flat and retreating, his jaw undershot and powerful, and he was covered with matted hair pretty much all over.

## ONE EYE

His one eye at times was beady black with intelligence, and the next minute it would waver and become plaintive and unreasoning like the eye of a frightened little child. His manner of life was like his eye.

At times he would behave after a cunningly-thought-out schedule, and the next minute he would be doing something that was purely instinctive.

As he sat in the mouth of his cave blinking, and scratching his stomach with a blunt flint, he was revolving a

## THE PAGAN

mighty question. One Eye had a daughter.

According to our notions she was very ugly, but the men of the tribe to which One Eye belonged were after her. It was the mating season and she was of suitable age to pair. She looked like her father, but was not so hairy. Her mother had been eaten by wolves when Maku (for that was the girl's name) was only a few years old. And so she had been brought up by her father, who was very fond of her. And now

## ONE EYE

that it was time for them to part, he naturally wanted a considerable compensation for the loss of his daughter. She made him very comfortable.

Strong Hand had offered three very finely balanced clubs. You had only to swing one to be confident of getting your man. And One Eye wanted the



clubs very dearly. He loved to fight—and get the best of it. But then, Fish Catch, the renowned maker of nets, had

## THE PAGAN

offered him one of his best for the girl. And One Eye, who could not make nets himself, knew that his own private net was so rotted as to be useless, and that in order to live comfortably it was necessary to have a net—for a good net meant good food. So he was sadly torn in his mind.

There had been other offers for the girl, but none so glittering. And One Eye had promised on this very afternoon to decide between Strong Hand and Fish Catch.

## ONE EYE

When they came up, stooping, hairy, bent of knee, and stealthy, the one bearing the net, the other the clubs, One Eye had not come to any decision.

They sat down before him, without salutation, and for some moments blinked and dug at the earth with their toes. Strong Hand was the first to speak.

“With any of these clubs —” he began.

But Fish Catch broke in.

“Clubs!” and grunted.

“What are the use of weapons

## THE PAGAN

to one that is without means of procuring food. It is well known that One Eye is too old to hunt with success. If he would live he must fish. Now this net—see it is of the best fibre, and knotted as I alone can knot. It will last you twenty years—maybe twenty-five—”

“One Eye,” said Strong Hand, “is first of all a fighter. If he gives me the girl I will see to it that he never wants for food.”

“That is the best talk yet,” said One Eye.

## ONE EYE

“Then you give her to me?” said Strong Hand.

“Slowly—slowly,” said One Eye. “I must have time to consider. But whom have we here?”



## CHAPTER II

### NO MAN

THE three paused to listen. The intelligent look went out of their eyes, and gave place to the plaintive child look—the animal look.

“That will be No Man,” said Fish Catch presently.

Now if you or I had been in the glade in front of One Eye’s cave, we would not have known that there was

## NO MAN

anybody but One Eye, Strong Hand and Fish Catch within a hundred miles. But these three men having the acuteness of dogs, had heard footsteps that were half a mile away, and not only that, but they had almost instantly known to whom the footsteps belonged. If the wind had been right, they could have told also by sense of smell.

“He is coming in this direction,” said One Eye.

“He steps stronger with one foot than the other,” said Strong Hand. “He is

## THE PAGAN

carrying something heavy."

"Perhaps No Man wants One Eye's daughter," said Fish Catch with an ugly laugh.

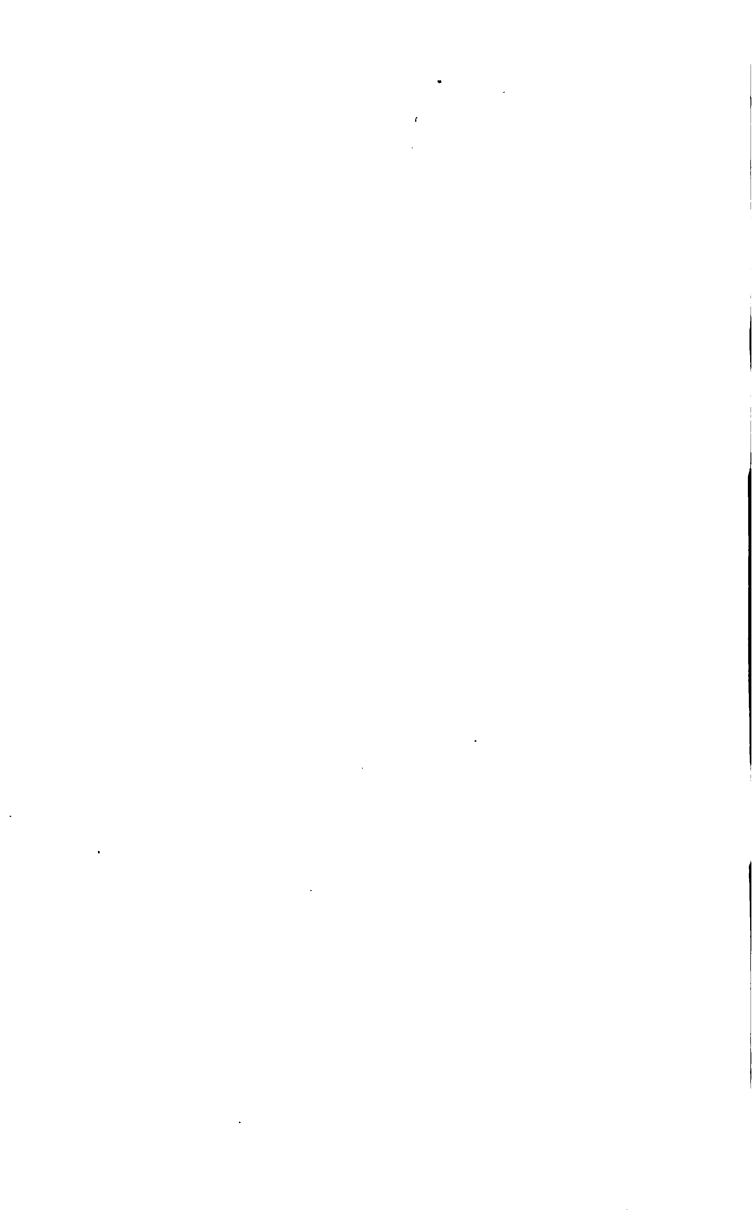
"I wonder what he is carrying?" said One Eye.

This No Man was so called, because he would neither hunt, fish, make weapons, nets, or marry. Therefore he was No Man. He lived on charity, and scratched pictures on bone. That was the only thing that interested him. He was suffered to live only because he was mysterious and because the tribe liked to



HE SCRATCHED PICTURES ON BONE

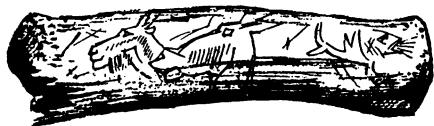




## NO MAN

go to his cave and look at the pictures when there was nothing better to do.

Presently he came out of the woods, slope-shouldered and long-armed like the others, but not so heavily built, nor so apishly skulled. He seemed, besides, less stealthy, but more timid.



He had tucked under his right arm a huge flat bone. This he laid before One Eye. It was covered with little

etched scenes of the chase and of the fight—throughout which a man, palpably having but one eye, deported himself with the utmost heroism—now strangling a bear, and now beating the life out of an enemy.

“This,” said No Man, is the whole story of One Eye from the beginning. It is the most beautiful picture bone that has ever been made in the world. Sitting alone in my cave, it befell on a time that a great loneliness came upon me. And the woman whose image

## NO MAN

rose most often before me, was the daughter of One Eye. Therefore I have wrought the bone, sparing no labor, and now I offer it to One Eye for the loss of his daughter. It is a thing which will keep him company in his old age. For to look upon it is to be reminded of his glorious deeds."

As One Eye examined the picture bone, the intelligence went out of his one eye. It wavered and became plaintive. Reason told him that nets were more valuable than clubs

## THE PAGAN

and clubs more valuable than pictures. But desire, which is a thing apart from reason, clamored for the bone.

“I wish this picture bone,” he said presently. “It is of no use, neither is it of any value. Yet I wish it.”

Strong Hand and Fish Catch looked at one another stealthily and then at No Man. It would be impossible to say which sprang upon him first, nor at whose hands he suffered the most. They so choked, beat and clubbed him that he screamed for mercy. One

## NO MAN

· Eye blinked in the mouth of his cave and chuckled.

“Is it enough?” cried Strong Hand presently, “Filthy-do-nothing—Mar-rowless-bone.”

“It is enough,” said No Man, and they let him go.

Directly he had gained his feet, he ran from that place with incredible swiftness, and howled as he ran.

“The picture bone,” said Fish Catch to One Eye, “is now ours, but knowing that you desire it, we give it to you to be a solace in your old

## THE PAGAN

age. And now it remains for you to choose between those admirably balanced but somewhat antiquated clubs which Strong Hand offers and this invaluable net knotted by myself."

"Fish Catch—Strong Hand," said One Eye. "I have thought of a way by which we may all be satisfied. The thought came to me when you fell upon No Man. Let each one of you take a club, and at the word fight, the one who wins shall give me his present and take the girl."

## NO MAN

Fish Catch measured Strong Hand with his eye; Strong Hand measured Fish Catch. They nodded, which meant that what the old man said was good talk.

The latter called over his shoulder into the cave.

“Maku, come out! There will be a fight!”

Maku came at once, eagerly. She was, as we have said, the image of her father, only less hairy. She was considered very alluring by the young men of the tribe.

Meanwhile Strong Hand and

## THE PAGAN

Fish Catch had each taken a club and backed away from each other.

“Is it about me?” asked Maku.

“It is.”

She laughed happily.

“Fight!” commanded One Eye.

At the word Strong Hand and Fish Catch sprang forward and fell upon each other with roars and blows. There was no question of fence involved, only the ability to hit hardest and take the most punishment. As they fought they

## NO MAN

became beasts, yelping, snarling, snapping and foaming—totally unlike articulate men. Blows that would have splintered a modern skull to atoms were given and taken. Now the clubs cracked upon bone and now thudded upon muscle. One Eye and Maku roared with laughter and screamed with pleasure. The fight ended with a blow that broke Fish Catch's forehead into two halves. But, although he fell as if struck by lightning, he did not die at once; he moaned and his lips twitched. His eyes

## THE PAGAN

were plaintive and uncomprehending like those of a frightened child. He blinked, too, as he died.

✓ Strong Hand tossed his club down at One Eye's feet.

"The girl is yours," said One Eye.

Strong Hand's eyes glittered and he looked the girl over. He reached forward a vast hairy hand and took her by the shoulders. But she wrenched loose, half laughing, half screaming, and fled into the cave. Strong Hand followed. One Eye chuckled and thought

## NO MAN

upon the days of his youth.

In the darkness of the cave there was a sudden fierce struggle, a cry of pain from Strong Hand, and Maku, bounding from the entrance, made swiftly down the slope toward the forest. But Strong Hand, bleeding on the shoulder where her teeth had met, was close behind. Swift as she was, he caught up with her in a few bounds and felled her with a blow on the head. Stunned and motionless she lay at his feet.

Strong Hand twined his left

## THE PAGAN

hand in her long black hair and dragged her after him until the trees had closed behind them both.

When One Eye had done laughing, for the whole scene had seemed very humorous to him, he gathered together his treasures and hid them in the cave.

“I now have,” he said, “the clubs, the net, the strongest among three for a son-in-law, and also the picture bone. I am, therefore, the richest man in the tribe, save only Moon Face, and than him there is

none richer in all the forest."

When One Eye thought about the clubs his eye flashed and he clinched his hands. When he thought about the net he scratched his stomach—either with hand or foot. But when he thought about the picture bone, the reason went out of his eye, and it became strange and plaintive.

And as for Maku, it was not long before she followed her husband like a dog, whimpering and laughing when he spoke to her, craving his carresses and enjoying his blows.



## CHAPTER III

### THE BLASTED TREE AND THE BLUE-JAY

**N**O MAN was very sore because he had been beaten and robbed. Fish Catch being dead, he particularly hated Strong Hand and wanted Strong Hand's blood. But he was afraid to go and take it, and so he dwelt in his cave and plotted mischief.

## THE BLASTED TREE

And because no artist can work when he is angry, he gave up scratching pictures on bone.

No Man was undoubtedly a coward, but he was very cunning. He had schemes in his head that nobody else had yet thought of. He had the creative spirit.

So far it had been useful only in evolving pictures and ingenious ways of scratching them on bone ; but now, so No Man swore, it should evolve him a weapon against which none could stand and

## THE PAGAN

his vengeance would be accomplished.

He thought over the different kinds of weapons then in use; clubs with stone-heads, wooden clubs, smooth round stones for throwing, and spears.

These last were just coming into fashion, we may say. They were short, stiff shafts with heads of chipped flint lashed to them with deer sinew, which if put on wet and allowed to dry, shrank and became as tight and hard as wire. No Man

## THE BLASTED TREE

thought these over, and resolved to think of something entirely new. Clubs and spears brought you to close quarters, and that was not the way No Man wanted to fight. Throwing stones required a proficiency which he did not possess, and was not often fatal—even at best. He went back to the spear. Why not throw it? This was an entirely new idea. No use. Same business as stones—uncertain.

Then he pictured in his agile mind, how, the spear

## THE PAGAN

having missed, Strong Hand would chase him with a club and beat his brains out.

He went so far as to dream this unpleasant scene several times at night. When this happened he howled in his sleep.

No, he must have something entirely new, something that would kill—unerringly—at a good distance. But with all his cleverness, he could not think of just the right thing.

And if his fellow-tribesmen had not been charitable, he

## THE BLASTED TREE

would have starved to death while he was thinking.

One day the big nut tree in front of No Man's cave was struck by lightning, and when he got the courage to go and look, he discovered that it had been split into fine wands, half as big as his wrist. He tried to break one but it would only bend. When he let go it sprang back nearly straight, but not quite because it was sappy and unseasoned.

No Man sat down and thought. His face was all

## THE PAGAN

covered with puzzle wrinkles. He knew that he had an idea, but he did not know what it was.

“Never mind,” he said, “I will take some of these sticks and play with them and, perhaps, that idea will come out.”

So with grunts and twists and heaves, he managed to break off half a dozen of the sticks. But it was hard work, for the wood was as tough as hickory—which was just the kind of wood it happened to be.

## THE BLASTED TREE

No Man played with his sticks and became very fond of them. At night he hid them in his cave, but all day he had them out in the sunshine, where he could bend them and let them snap straight, and think about the idea that wouldn't come out. The dryer the sticks got, the tougher they got, the more bendable and the more springy. Sometimes No Man got angry with his sticks for the very bendiness that he loved in them.

“Why don't you stay bent,

## THE PAGAN

when I bend you?" he said. "Perhaps you don't think I'm the master here? I'm going to take you"—he addressed the biggest and most refractory—"and bend you and tie your ends together with deer sinew and then you'll stay bent."

He was as good as his word. He lashed one end of the deer sinew to one end of the stick, bent the stick, took a hitch round the other end, and made fast. Then he



## THE BLASTED TREE

took the stick by the middle with one hand, the sinew with the other, pulled and let go. The sinew twanged loudly.

“This is a good thing that I have made,” said No Man, and then like a flash the idea that had been struggling in his head came out.

First he looked about cautiously, then he listened, and as he listened his nostrils quivered and you could see that he was scenting as well. There was nobody near. He then fitted a straight stick to the

## THE PAGAN

string of his bow, pulled and let fly. The stick sprang into the air, and travelled what seemed a great distance to No Man—but it did not fly true and it wobbled. “That,” he said to himself, “is because the spear is not even all over, and because the twang thing is not properly made. These things require much thought.”

So he thought, and labored and experimented, and hid in his cave and glowed with the joy of creation. In time he had made a proper enough bow. But it was so power-

## THE BLASTED TREE

ful that no man of our time could have bent it, and No Man chuckled when he saw the power with which it hurled the little equal shafts which he had made.

But they did not fly as straight as he wished. Often the back end of the shaft would somersault over the front end, or the shaft would hit the object aimed at with its side instead of with its point. One day, as he was trying to perfect this part of his weapon, a blue jay came and sat a little way off on the

## THE PAGAN

top of a little pine, spread its tail feathers and laughed at him.

“Now I will show you what flying is really like,” he said. And he let fly, and the shaft flew as straight as a bird, but much more swiftly. Then No Man rolled on the ground and laughed. Then he sat up and crooned, a long inarticulate croon of triumph. And he finished up by saying:

“I am the greatest man in the world. Nobody else is nearly as great. There is nobody of whom there is any

## THE BLASTED TREE

record that is so great. I will soon kill Strong Hand and take his woman to my cave. It is not good to live alone when one is great. No, I will not take Strong Hand's woman, I will get a woman that is all new, and she shall be mine. But first I must get some sharp points for these things. And there is no one so clever with flint as No Foot and to him I will go."



## CHAPTER IV

### NO MAN AND NO FOOT

**A**ND so he hid away his secret invention and started off to the flinty hill-side where No Foot had his work shop.

This No Foot had once been a mighty hunter, but as luck would have it a great stone had rolled upon him as he climbed a hill and smashed one of his feet so

## NO MAN AND NO FOOT

that it dragged after him. Forced to abandon the chase, he studied how best to work in flint, and became in time so clever that he made the best knives and clubs of which there was any record. He invented the spear. In return for his work, the tribe gave him fish and meat, nuts and berries, so that he lived on the fat of the land and was held in great esteem. But he was a surly old beggar, difficult to approach, avaricious and susceptible to nothing but flattery. He had

## THE PAGAN

an ugly old wife who kept cave for him. No Man found No Foot sitting in the midst of his chipped flints, chipping busily. A goodly row of sharp polished knives and spear heads spoke also of his industry. He did not look up as No Man approached tho' undoubtedly he both heard and smelt him.

No Man squatted directly in front of No Foot, and blinked at him. No Foot blinked at the flint that he was chipping.

“These are the most

## NO MAN AND NO FOOT

beautiful flints that I have ever seen," said No Man presently.

"You are not telling me anything new," said No Foot in a surly voice. Tho' he was very much flattered inside.

"But how large they are," said No Man.

"They are for men," said No Foot, "not for bone scratchers."

"I have thought," said No Man, without taking offence, "that you made them of this size, because you were un-

## THE PAGAN

able to make them smaller."

"Unable!" said No Foot, flaring up, "I can make them of any size I choose."

No Man laughed provokingly.

"Go back to your cave, Do nothing, No Man," said No Foot. "You are between me and the light. Furthermore your person is offensive and your face of appalling ugliness."

No Man continued to laugh. Then he addressed the hillside.

"He is angry," he said.

## NO MAN AND NO FOOT

“Ho-Ho—because he can’t make them small. He has three feet and two of them are hands. Ho-Ho. He has three feet but he cannot run on legs. He has two hands but he cannot make little spear heads. He is a lump of mud, a filthy bear, a litterer of the ground. Furthermore, if he were not so humorous to look at, I could not bear the neighborhood of him.”

Even to No Foot this seemed a clever sally, and he could not help laughing.

## THE PAGAN

“Why do you want me to make little spear heads?” he said presently.

“I will tell you,” said No Man, “but do not repeat it. I want them to put on little spears.”

“You have a ready tongue,” said No Foot, “considering that you are a filthy ne’er-do-well.”

“I want three of them,” said No Man.

“And what will you give me in exchange for my time and my flint.”

“I will come sometimes

## NO MAN AND NO FOOT

and talk to you," said No Man.

"You will get a clubbing between the eyes, if you do."

"I will draw the story of your life on a nice white bone, and give it to you. It will consist entirely of hunts and fights in which you get the best of it."

"That is something," said No Foot, and he scratched his stomach thoughtfully.

"I will also," said No Man, "put in a great many pictures of very beautiful women who have run away

## THE PAGAN

from their husbands for desire of you."

No Foot grinned.

"You shall have the little spear heads."

"They must be of this bigness," said No Man, and he showed No Foot just what he wanted.

"And when do I get my bone?"

"I shall labor hard, but it will be some time. When do I get my flints?"

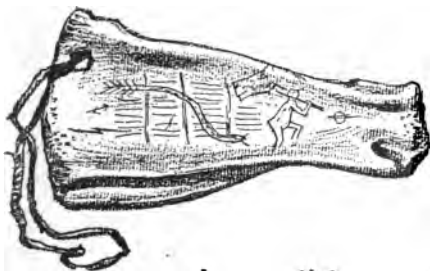
"On the very day that I get my bone."

## NO MAN AND NO FOOT

“I would like them in two days.”

“You can’t have them—not till I get my bone.”

And No Man was obliged to be content with that. So he ran all the way to his cave, got him a flat, white, clean bone and fell to scratching



upon  
it the  
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tive life of No  
Foot, his mighty deeds, and  
his mighty virtues. When

## THE PAGAN

it was finished he carried it to No Foot, and received in exchange three beautiful little spear heads of sea green flint.

“I have no doubt you will become a hunter,” said No Foot politely, for he was pleased with his bone.

“These flints are even better than what I expected from so clever a maker,” said No Man.

“And as for this bone,” said No Foot, “it makes me feel as if I were young again and two-footed.” And so with mutual compliments they parted.



## CHAPTER V

### THE MOOSE

**B**UT No Foot carried the flints to his cave, and fitted them to his arrows, and he fitted feathers to the string ends, and having devoured, raw, a seven pound fish that had been given him (for fire and cooking had not yet been discovered) he lay down and slept till the hour before sunrise.

## THE PAGAN

As he slept, his brow wrinkled and unwrinkled, his hands and feet twitched and contracted. Sometimes he made a noise in his throat that was like growling, sometimes he started as if in fear.

For when the first men dreamed, they dreamed, for the most part, about the ancient ages when they had not been men; of long, cool leaps from tree to tree; of feet that had the grip of strong hands, and of the great fear that had driven them to be-

## THE MOOSE

come men—fear of the other beasts, fear of the night.

That which turned into man, differed only from the other beasts in the acuteness of its sensations. Fear, pain, shadows, and lust. Fear worked upon its intelligence and it survived, where nobler and stronger and more courageous animals perished—the ship-size creatures of the deep, and the mastadon and the mammoth.

Man in his fear found out many inventions by which he proved his fitness to sur-

## THE PAGAN

vive. And the battle did not go to the strong.

But when No Man awoke, he did not remember his dreams. He arose, shook himself, took up his bow and his arrows, and trotted into the forest. He trotted with caution, for he wished his secret to be his secret, until the sun stood over his head and he was far from the caves of his tribe. Then he began to hunt.

He had probably less notion of hunting than any member of the tribe, but if we

## THE MOOSE

had seen him and had not seen the others, we would have thought him the most astute hunter imaginable.

He had the instinct of the chase, dormant in all of us, but better, he had senses nearly as acute as those of a dog. Eyes that could see in the dark, ears that could hear the rose-leaf footfall of a wolf on soft ground, and a nose that could scent that same wolf half a mile away if the wind blew right.

All the time that he had been running, from sunrise

## THE PAGAN

to high noon, his nose and ears had been twitching with the smells and sounds of the forest. But now he ran in a great circle, with his eyes on the ground, and paid strict attention.

Presently clear, deep, black, and shining in the wet, rank ground by a stream, he saw where a moose had stepped. The track pointed into the wind, and was fresh and clear. He followed, twitching and silent.

The track followed the stream bed, and then turned

## THE MOOSE

a steep angle and made for the deep shades of the forest, where the moose goes to rest during the heat of the day.

No Man came upon him lying on his side among cool, green bushes. Trees, two hundred feet high and straight as masts, towered above in a twilight of their own making. And there was a mighty hush and silence, the silence of high noon in the forest where no beast stirs save only man.

Then there was a twanging jar and the sound of an arrow cleaving the air and

## THE PAGAN

jolting into flesh and muscle.

The great moose rose to his feet, very black, maned, bearded, extended of horn and terrible. He searched for his enemy with little, venomous, blood-shot eyes. But he swayed as he searched. for just behind his fore-shoulder, as if part of him, as if something that had mysteriously grown out of him, there projected a bunch of bright blue feathers, and dark blood throbbed forth like a spring at their root.





UNCONQUERED—BLEEDING TO DEATH

## THE MOOSE

No Man, for he knew that the moose is not good at seeing, had hidden himself among the bushes, and he looked cautiously between the leaves to watch his victim die.

For an hour he did not move. And the moose, save for swaying of the head from side to side, and dartings of his dimming eyes, did not move either. He stood grandly in his tracks, arrogant, fearless, unconquered, and bleeding to death. At the end of the hour he had staggered and recovered. But

## THE PAGAN

he only stiffened his legs and held his head the more proudly.

A little later, dizziness overcame him and he fell like a thing struck. But instantly he sprang to his feet, alert and menacing. But he knew that the end was near.

Once he turned his head and sniffed at the thing that was killing him—not angrily, not even impatiently, but curiously, to see what it was. Then when he felt that unsupported he must fall, he walked slowly and quietly

## THE MOOSE

to a great tree and leaned against it.

He remained there till late in the afternoon, then his knees buckled, and he fell, and when No Man went to him, he was dead.

No Man drew the arrow from the moose and withdrawing a little distance shot it into him again, together with his two other arrows. And he kept this up till dark; for it was in his mind that it would be best not to miss when it came to shooting at Strong Hand.

## THE PAGAN

When night came, No Man tore meat from the moose and ate till he was full; then he went back to the stream and drank deep; then he returned to the moose's carcas and, lying against it, slept.

Wolves came up thro' the forest, and looked longingly at the dead moose, and smelt him—at a safe distance; but it was the summer season and they were not hungry enough to run straight into the smell of man. And they withdrew, coughing,





THE KNITTER OF NETS

## THE PAGAN

whining, snarling, and returned again to feast in imagination.

When the moon rose, they went to an open space in the forest and howled dismally, so that No Man twitching as to ears and nose awoke. It was some little time before he composed himself to sleep, for his mind was teeming with thoughts. But he did not think of Strong Hand and woman and revenge as had been his wont of late. He thought rather of the pictures that he made

## THE MOOSE

upon bone, for what little soul he had was the soul of an artist. And he planned in the dark of the night, how upon a great, clean bone, the shovel of its own antlers, he would inscribe the moose with the arrow in him, standing arrogantly among the bushes as he bled to death, and leaning unconquered against the tree. Then fear of the night descended upon No Man, and he closed his eyes and slept—twitching, coughing and snarling as the dreams of ancient days possessed him.

## THE MOOSE

But when he awakened in the strong light of day, he thought of the bow and arrows which he had made, of how he was going to hunt man, and of the sweetness which is revenge. But he put off that hunt until another day.



## CHAPTER VI

### SHE WOLF

**S**HE WOLF was the name of a woman. She lived in a cave of her own, and supported herself by hunting and fishing. Men had wooed her, but had been so ferociously rejected, that they had been content thereafter to leave her strictly alone.

She could run, swim, climb, use the club or jab

## SHE WOLF

the spear nearly as well as a man, and it was said that she lived apart because she was barren and ashamed. She was long of arm and flank, deep-breasted, deep-bellied, hairy and powerful. No Man cast his eyes upon this woman, who was more man than himself, and desired her. He hung about her cave, as a bear hangs about a tree full of honey—and bees. He stuck bright feathers in his hair and smiled and nodded whenever she cast a glance in his direction. He scratched upon

## THE PAGAN

bone scenes in which she figured as a heroine and he left them in places where she would find them. He



grew sick with lust and forgot all about Strong Hand and the vengeance which was ripe. He made attempts to enter into conversation with her, only to be cut short.

The less his suit prospered the more keenly did he wage it. But when he found that ordinary methods were of no avail, he turned to that

## SHE WOLF

old friend of his, cunning, and thought out a plan.

Early upon a morning before the sun had risen, he took his bow and arrows, and went in silence and sat down before the mouth of She Wolf's cave. Then he laid his arrows on the ground and began to twang the string of his bow. At the first twang, She Wolf woke twitching; at the second, she crawled to a place where she could see what was going on outside the cave and yet not be seen.

## THE PAGAN

When she saw that it was only No Man, playing the fool, with a bent stick and a stretched skin, she was disgusted.

No Man knew perfectly well that he was being watched, and so the next time he twanged the bow, he closed his eyes and rolled his head, as if pleasure unutterable possessed him. Then She Wolf's curiosity was aroused and she came out of the cave, and in the white mist of the morning she seemed wonderfully alluring

## SHE WOLF

to No Man, so that little shivers ran thro' him.

But he twanged his string and pretended that he found it more interesting than the woman.

"This is something that I do not understand," said She Wolf to herself. And aloud, "What are you doing, No Man?" It was the first time she had ever spoken to him.

"This string," said No Man, without looking up, "is telling me how to get all the things that I wish; the

## THE PAGAN

beasts of the forest, the blood of my enemies, and the woman I desire."

"It is telling you lies, then," said She Wolf. "For altho' it may go on talking 'till night, it will not tell you how to get me."

"Listen," said No Man, and he twanged the string.

"Well?" said She Wolf.

"It has just told me how to get you," said No Man.

"Then it is still lying," said She Wolf. "For I do not wish to go to your cave and I am stronger than you."

## SHE WOLF

“That is as it may be,” said No Man, and he twanged his string, and closed his eyes, and rocked his head.

“Let me see it,” said She Wolf.

“You do not understand it,” said No Man, “and it would turn against you.”

“I am not afraid,” said She Wolf, but she did not speak the whole truth.

“In my hands,” said No Man, “this thing is stronger than any man or beast, but in another’s hands it is only a

## THE PAGAN

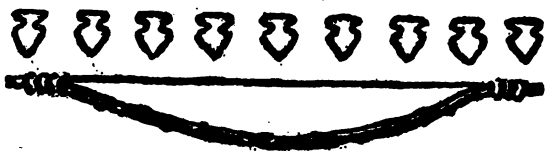
bent stick and a length of stretched hide.”

“I do not believe you,” said She Wolf, but she half believed.

“Let us hunt together,” said No Man, “and I will show you.”

She Wolf went into the cave and came out with her club and her spear and her flint knife.

“I am ready,” she said.



## CHAPTER VII

### THE WOOING OF SHE WOLF

**A**ND so they trotted into the forest. But She Wolf ran ahead of No Man to show that she was not afraid of him.

Old One Eye, who was just awake, heard them as they passed up the valley below his cave. And he said, "that is No Man and he is running with She Wolf, I do

## THE PAGAN

not see why she has accepted the advances of such a weak good-for-nothing. He will make her do the hunting while he sits in the cave and scratches on bone."

She Wolf and No Man trotted steadily for two hours until they had come to a good hunting ground. And as they ran their noses and ears twitched.

Presently and of one accord they stopped, and She Wolf pointed to a dense thicket of alders that stood about a pool of a stream. They could

## THE WOOING OF SHE WOLF

hear the occasional clink of hoofs on submerged stones, and a sound of cropping and munching.

She Wolf and No Man dropped to the ground, and crawled to the alders and into them as silently as two serpents. A buck with a fine head was wading in the midst of the pool and feeding among the lily pads.

There was no way in which She Wolf could get at him with club or spear, and she had about made up her mind to rush into the

## THE PAGAN

pool, on the chance of striking before he could get away. But it was a poor chance and she knew it. Still she gathered herself to spring, and just then—twang—she turned with a snarl, for she had forgotten all about No Man and his bent stick. No Man was looking innocently at his right hand, and holding the bow in his left.

“You don’t even know enough to keep still,” said She Wolf angrily, “no wonder everybody despises you.”

## THE WOOING OF SHE WOLF

“Look in the pool,” said No Man imperturbably.

The open place that the buck had occupied among the lily pads, was red and oily with blood. But the buck had gone.

“He went out upon the other side,” said No Man. “Let us follow him.”

So they waded thro’ the pool and the stones clicked under their feet, but this time it was No Man who went ahead.

Here and there the leaves of the alders were splashed

## THE PAGAN

with blood, and some of the sharp tracks that the buck had made as he leaped were full of blood.

The track led out of the alders, across a gray marsh and into a thicket of beechnut bushes and wild raspberries.

Out of the midst of this thicket the buck suddenly sprang, clear to the hooves, and leaped away. His antlers were laid back on his shoulders and he made a noise that was between a whimper and a scream.

They came upon him

## THE WOOING OF SHE WOLF

further on in another thicket, but he could not get up, he could only look at them with his great brown eyes, and tremble.

There was a bunch of blue feathers that seemed to be sprouting from his side. Every now and then the buck turned his head and licked the feathers with his rough tongue.

She Wolf was now thoroughly afraid of No Man and she was sorry she had come into the forest with him. Therefore, to give herself

## THE PAGAN

heart she stepped forward and hit the buck a terrible blow with her club, right between the eyes.

“Take your knife and cut off some meat,” said No Man, “for it is a good time to eat.”

She Wolf did what she was told, and for the first time in her life. When they had eaten as much as they could, No Man said:

“Now, we will go and drink.”

They found a place above the alder pool, where the

## THE WOOING OF SHE WOLF

brook grass was sweet and soft to lie in, and the brook tinkled clear and cold among the stones.

No Man lay on his belly and drank till he swelled. Presently he rose with dripping face and mouth.

“When I have drank,” said She Wolf, “I shall sleep as is my custom. But if you come near me, I will take my club to you.”

“Drink,” said No Man.

She Wolf placed her club and her spear and her knife carefully to one side, and

## THE PAGAN

lay down to drink. When she had finished she started to rise, pushing against the ground with her hands. But No Man who had possessed himself secretly of the club, now brought it down on her head so that she pitched face downward into the stream.

No Man dragged her out and waited patiently for her to recover consciousness.

After a time she came to, but she was dazed and looked about uncomprehendingly.

“Which is the stronger of

## THE WOOING OF SHE WOLF

us?" said No Man. Then She Wolf knew that No Man had struck her, and she sprang at him furiously, her big sharp teeth flashing, and her lips curling. But her hands were empty and No Man struck her again with the club.

"They are all alike," he repeated as she lay for the second time insensible on the grass. "Some are stronger than others, but no one of them is so strong as a man."

As she lay insensible, her lips twitched and she groaned.

## THE PAGAN

“She will not wish to fight with me any more,” said No Man.

She opened her eyes. But they were not the eyes of a woman; they were those of a frightened animal.

“Which is the stronger of us,” said No Man.

“You are the stronger,” said She Wolf.

And she crawled to his feet, whining and moaning.

“Will you come and live in my cave?” said No Man.

But She Wolf was not yet conquered, and she made a

## THE WOOING OF SHE WOLF

crafty snatch for the club. Failing in this she flung herself on the ground, for she made sure No Man would kill her.

“I will show you who is the master,” said No Man.

And he took up the spear and beat her with the handle. But She Wolf did not scream or cry out. She grunted only and moaned a little, for knowing that she had found her master, she took a certain pleasure in the blows.

No Man did not stop beat-

## THE PAGAN

ing her until he was tired of plying the spear handle.

For the second time she crawled to his feet whimpering and seeking to ingratiate herself with him.

“I will go to your cave,” she said.

“That is good talk,” said No Man “and I will not beat you any more to-day.”

She Wolf whimpered and touched his feet.

“There is a thorn in your foot,” said No Man, and he drew it out for her.

At that tears gushed from

## THE WOOING OF SHE WOLF

She Wolf's eyes and she sobbed, and it was because her master had been kind to her.

“This,” said No Man to himself, “is something that I have never seen before. It may be that I have struck her too hard and that she will die. And that will be a great trouble for she is very alluring.”

But She Wolf did not die; and she abode with No Man for three days in that place, and afterward she went with him to his cave, and fawned upon him.



## CHAPTER VIII

### THE FAINT HEART OF NO MAN

No Man and She Wolf kept the secret of the bow safe in their cave, and in the early mornings She Wolf went forth to hunt armed with spear and club, while No Man sat in the sun, and scratched the story of his life upon a fine white bone.

He scratched away with much boastful imagination;

## THE FAINT HEART OF NO MAN



picturing in order all the clever things that he really had done and as many others that he hadn't as he could possibly think of.

Whenever She Wolf came back from the hunting, she would admire the progress of the bone, and think to herself that No Man was the bravest and cleverest man of whom there was any record.

For the most part No Man was kind to her, but when

## THE PAGAN

she returned empty handed, or his work did not please him, he would beat her till she was half dead. And she loved him alike for the caresses and the blows.

The pictures that she liked best were those in which she herself figured—first savage, untamable and to be feared—then hunting with No Man in the forest, then lying insensible by the brook, then fawning at No Man's feet, and then following him to his cave.

That was the last scene

## THE FAINT HEART OF NO MAN

depicted on the bone, but No Man had taken care to leave space for one scene more. And when She Wolf asked what it was he would not tell her.

So he put the bone aside and went to work on others. And the most of a year passed, and the rest of the tribe began to think well of No Man, for he hunted occasionally and always he killed.

One day, She Wolf said that she did not wish to go hunting. But No Man struck her and made her go.

## THE PAGAN

“Do not come back,” he said, “without two haunches of moose for I have promised one to No Foot in return for some flints which he is making for me. And the other one we will eat ourselves.”

When the sun was high, No Man started on a round of visits, for he dearly loved conversation, and boasting. But he got no further than the cave of old Moon Face, for there he heard news which sent him packing after his bow and arrows.

## THE FAINT HEART OF NO MAN

Moon Face was the oldest man in the tribe and the richest. He looked precisely like a baboon, only the hairs fringing his face were white, and that was why he was called Moon Face. Moon Face never let go of anything that he got his hands on. All his life he had been a collector. His cave was full of clubs, nets, spears, flints, bright-colored feathers, and smooth round stones for throwing. He was very stingy and never exchanged except at advantage to him-

## THE PAGAN

self. He had outlived a number of wives, and there were many of his descendants among the tribe. His youngest son, and his last wife, a half grey, apish old creature, lived in the cave with him; the boy hunted and the woman attended to the wants of all three.

No Man found Moon Face blinking in the sunlight before his cave. No Man squatted and waited for his host to begin.

“How are your affairs getting on?” said the old man presently.

## THE FAINT HEART OF NO MAN

“I have nothing to complain of,” said No Man. “And how is it with you?”

“I do not get the attention to which I am entitled,” said Moon Face. “But I am able to exist.”

Now he squirmed and fell to scratching himself between the shoulder blades.

“Maybe I can help you,” said No Man.

“It is nothing,” said Moon Face. But he only squirmed and scratched the harder.

No Man approached, bent over the old man, and began

## THE PAGAN

to search thro' the snarled mat of hair that covered his back. Presently he crushed something between his thumb and forefinger and threw it away.

“That is a great relief,” said Moon Face, “I have been after that fellow all the morning. And now we can talk at our ease. Have you heard what has at last happened in Strong Hand’s cave?”

“No,” said No Man, betraying no interest, “I have not heard of him or seen him in a long time.”

## THE FAINT HEART OF NO MAN

“Well, at last he has a child,” said Moon Face.

“A daughter I should imagine,” said No Man spitefully.

“Yes. A daughter.”

“They have been a long time about it,” said No Man.

“I was beginning to think they were both as dry as old bones.”

“Strong Hand passed this morning,” said Moon Face, “on his way to the hunt. He was strutting like a cock partridge. You might have thought that his was the first

## THE PAGAN

child of which we have any record."

"So he has gone hunting, has he?" said No Man. "I think I will drop round to his cave and have a look at the child."

"Anything that has taken so long to make should be worth looking at," said Moon Face. And they laughed heartily, and parted with mutual compliments and good will.

But No Man did not go at once to Strong Hand's cave. First he went to his own and got his bow and

## THE FAINT HEART OF NO MAN

arrows. And then he hid himself in a clump of birches and poplars that Strong Hand would have to pass on the way home.

"This is just the time for killing," said No Man.

"Strong Hand is very proud and I will strike him. When he is dead there will be no one to hunt for his woman; and her milk will give out and the child will also die. Matters could not have been better arranged."

He waited patiently all thro' the afternoon and re-

viewed the prospective scene of his vengeance. It was the scene for which he had left a blank space on the big clean bone. Here would be the runway that

Strong Hand



must follow, here the thicket where he himself lay in hiding with his bow and arrows.

But it began to grow dark, and No Man was disturbed for at heart all men fear the dark. And when he heard Strong Hand strolling up the runway he was even more

THE FAINT HEART OF NO MAN  
disturbed. But he steadied  
himself and waited.

Suddenly he heard Strong  
Hand calling his name.

“What are you doing in  
there, No Man?”

No Man was seized with  
fear. And he said to himself,  
“I am a fool, for the wind  
was blowing from me to him  
all the time and he has smelled  
me out.”

He went out of the thicket  
and yawned when he saw  
Strong Hand. Strong Hand  
had slung a doe over his  
back and in his free hand

## THE PAGAN

were two spears and a club.

“I have been asleep,” said No Man. “It was cool in the thicket and I was weary.”

“Come to my cave?” said Strong Hand. “And I will give you a piece of meat and show you something.”

So he trotted along with Strong Hand to his cave, and was given meat and shown the girl-child. After which they parted with mutual compliments.

“May She Wolf bear you a son,” Strong Hand called after him.

## THE FAINT HEART OF NO MAN

But No Man went home to his cave raging, for he had played the fool and the coward and his vengeance was no nearer than ever.

When he got to his cave and found that She Wolf had not come back, his anger turned from himself to her. And he promised himself to give her a taste of the great stick which he kept for the purpose.

He sat in the cool, waiting and glowing like a coal.



## CHAPTER IX

### THE BIRTH OF SUNRISE

**A**FTER a time she came wearily, and slowly. With her left hand she dragged along the ground two great haunches of moose. In her right hand she held her club and her spear and her knife, and in the hollow of her right arm there was a downy bundle that moved a little.



## THE BIRTH OF SUNRISE

Her face was ever turned toward it.

No Man called to her angrily, and reached for his stick.

“Don’t strike me, No Man,” she said, “for I have brought you a good thing.”

“What good thing have you brought?” asked No Man.

“I have brought the moose meat,” she let it fall to the ground as also her weapons, “and I have brought this.”

## THE PAGAN

“But it is alive,” said No Man, “where did you get it?”

“It is mine—mine,” said She Wolf, “see how little it is—but already it is very strong and clings with its hands.”

Then she knelt before No Man and showed him the fruit of her deep forest labor.

“So that was why—” said No Man.

“Yes, that was why, and I am very weary,” said She Wolf. “Take him in your hands, for he is yours also.”

Then No Man forgot his

## THE BIRTH OF SUNRISE

anger, and his breast swelled with pride, and for once he was grateful to She Wolf.

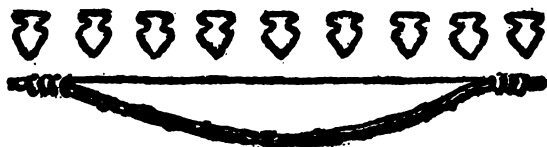
“I was not so long about it as Strong Hand,” he said, and there was a kind of strut in his voice, “and furthermore it is a man-child while his is but a girl.”

Then he took the child and held it clumsily. It was very little and covered with soft down, for all the world like a tiny monkey, and it clung to No Man's fingers with its little hands.

“He has not cried out

## THE PAGAN

once," said She Wolf. "He came to me in the morning as the sun rose, but I dared not come back without the moose meat, and therefore all the day we have hunted together, I and the man." Her bosom swelled with pride. "Already he has hunted the moose," she cried, "and because he came with the sun, we will call him Sunrise, and he will be a mighty hunter. Give him back to me—give him to me."



## CHAPTER X

### THE DEATH OF NO MAN

**NO** MAN was out bright and early the next morning visiting this cave and that to boast of his good fortune.

He strutted and made such a fuss generally that Old Moon Face said one might think No Man's was the first man-child of whom there was any record.

## THE PAGAN

When he had finished strutting and boasting, No Man trotted off into the woods to get what he needed for the safe accomplishment of the deed which he was still minded to do. And late in the afternoon he crept into a thicket near Strong Hand's cave and lay in wait.

But this time he had smeared himself from head to foot with moose dung, and he knew that it would take a keener nose than Strong Hand's to detect him.

Strong Hand had not killed

## THE DEATH OF NO MAN

that day, and as he drew near his cave, the strong smell of moose came to him from a thicket on the left of the runway.

Ears and nose twitching and eyes alert he turned cautiously into the thicket. Almost in his face there was a loud twanging jar, and at the same instant a pain like fire darted through his entrails, and he knew that he had been struck to death.

He dropped his spear, and felt foolishly at the little tuft of feathers that had suddenly

## THE PAGAN

become attached to him at a point just below the breast bone, and midway between the curling of the ribs.

Then his eyes grew red, and a roar that shook the thicket burst from his lips.

He seized his club and rushed forward — and to the right, crouching, sneaking and whimpering with fear he saw



## THE DEATH OF NO MAN

No Man running for dear life.

Once more Strong Hand bellowed, and when he heard that bellow No Man screamed, and dropping his bow and arrows, fled with redoubled speed. But Strong Hand was hard after him.

No Man was so frightened that he did not follow the runways and glades of the forest tho these were well known to him. He ran aimlessly and without husbanding his strength, slashing into bushes and through them,

## THE PAGAN

crashing into thickets of young trees, doubling and running in circles.

They crossed a brook that was waist deep, and No Man bounding up the further bank turned his head to locate Strong Hand and smashed straight into a tree. He was a moment recovering himself, during that moment Strong Hand gained.

A few minutes later Strong Hand tripped on a rock and fell at full length, so that his club whirled out of his hand and dropped at a distance.

## THE DEATH OF NO MAN

He arose and pursued unarmed. But No Man had gained. Still Strong Hand was the swifter runner, and if he had not been wounded, No Man could never have kept away from him so long.

Both were panting, and catching at the air with gulping mouths; but No Man was the more distressed, and his speed was diminishing. Inch by inch Strong Hand reduced the distance between them. The smell of the moose dung with which No

## THE PAGAN

Man had smeared himself became nearer, more pungent. Now Strong Hand was only four leaps behind, now three, now two—but his strength was going.

Then No Man tripped and fell screaming, and Strong Hand crushed down on him. They lay there for a little, and panted.

Presently, but slowly and cautiously Strong Hand raised himself until he was sitting astride of No Man. He dug his knees into No Man's sides, and he dug his fingers

## THE DEATH OF NO MAN

into the long matted hair of No Man's head.

They had fallen, as chance would have it, upon ground covered with jagged and broken rocks.

Strong Hand lifted No Man's head until it was level with his own breast, and then he smashed it down upon the rocks. And after that first blow No Man had no face, and after the second, the life went out of him.

But lest there be any mistake Strong Hand turned him over, and with his sharp,

## THE PAGAN

thick nails and gorilla fingers, tore him open, and dragged out his entrails and scattered them upon the rocks.

Then he withdrew to a little distance and leaning his back against a tree, prepared to die in peace. He tried many times to draw the arrow from him but could not and he fell to fingering the feathers foolishly and stroking them smooth. Then he began to itch between the shoulder blades, and he was so weak that he could not scratch the place, so that it troubled him a great deal.



## CHAPTER XI

### THE DEATH OF STRONG HAND

**I**T grew cold and dark and there was a singing in Strong Hand's ears so that he could distinguish no longer any but the most pronounced sounds of the forest; for instance, the plat-plat of soft padded feet on the fallen leaves.

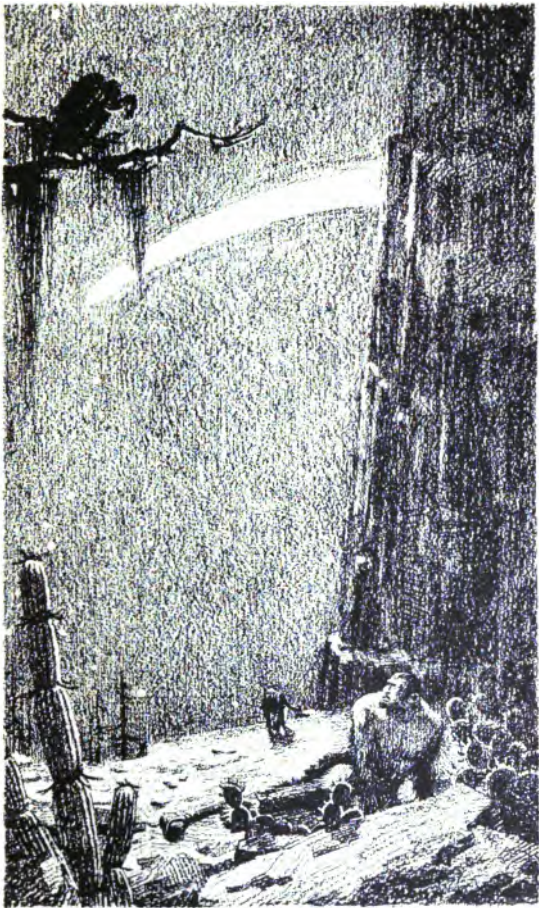
The sound of these feet were very near and all around

## THE PAGAN

him. As it grew darker he occasionally saw fiery eyes regarding him.

There was a whole circle of them, and the singing grew stronger and more loud in his ears. All at once from the place where he had left the body of No Man, arose whines, snarls, snappings, coughing, barking, and all the noises that wolves make when they quarrel over their meat.

“Not till I am dead,” said Strong Hand. “Not till I am dead,” and his eyes became mysterious and plain-



**"NOT TILL I AM DEAD"**



## THE DEATH OF STRONG HAND

tive like those of a child that is in trouble and he turned



them upward and saw where  
The Cause  
into which  
he was re-  
turning had  
cast a scarf-

of-stars across the sable shoulders of the night.



## CHAPTER XII

### MAKU AND SHE WOLF

**W**HEN the night, the day following, and the next night had passed, She Wolf took her son in the hollow of her arm and went to look for No Man. It was beginning to be autumn in the forest, the veins of the big mosswood leaves were already scarlet; the sassafras were yellow and red; the

## MAKU AND SHE WOLF

beeches yellow and crimson;  
the birches white and gold;  
the sky thinly blue, with  
wispish puffs of cloud gust-  
ing over it. The air was  
fine and keen.

She Wolf ran in a great  
circle, but slowly for she was  
very hungry, and came upon  
No Man's stale track in the  
thicket where he had lain in  
wait for Strong Hand.

The track tho stale was  
very plain, for no rain had  
fallen on it, and No Man had  
been running with all the  
weight of despair. She Wolf

## THE PAGAN

followed a little way, and stooping picked up No Man's bow and ten arrows which he had dropped in his flight.

Here the track was joined by Strong Hand's track, and She Wolf was puzzled and did not understand any of it.

"Why did he drop his weapons?" she said.

And she went on. But she sat down in a sunny place by the brook to nurse her son, who had begun to pipe aloud and clutch at her breasts with his tiny paws. As he snuggled and sucked and gasped,

## MAKU AND SHE WOLF

she crooned a song over him,  
making it up as she went  
along.

“We went into the forest,  
The Man and I  
We were looking for No Man  
Who had not come back from the hunting  
We came on his track  
The Man and I  
And we found his weapons strewing the ground.  
And we do not understand—”

She stopped in the middle,  
quivering and twitching for  
she heard footsteps behind her.  
It was Maku carrying her  
little daughter and out to look  
for Strong Hand.

“Have you seen anything  
of Strong Hand?” she said.

## THE PAGAN

“His track is with No Man’s,” said She Wolf. “I have followed them both to this place.”

“The tracks are of the same age,” said Maku. “They were doubtless running together on the same hunt.”

“Then let us follow them together,” said She Wolf. “Have done suckling,” and she looked up and smiled at Maku. “He would drain me as dry as a bone if I would let him,” she said.

“The girl, too, is always

## MAKU AND SHE WOLF

hungry," said Maku with pride.

"They are of an age," said She Wolf. "It may be that one day—"

And so talking and gossiping pleasantly, as women will, even when anxious, they waded across the brook and followed the broad trail of No Man and Strong Hand.

But when the trail ended they found nothing but bones, and not the whole of a skeleton at that, for the wolves snarling, had carried away many of the lesser bones.

## THE PAGAN

They found Strong Hand's bones under the tree where he had died, but some wolf



had carried off the blood-smeared arrow that had killed him. When the women knew that they were alone in the world, they beat their breasts

## MAKU AND SHE WOLF

and howled, and threw themselves repeatedly upon the ground.

All day they wailed for the hunters who would not come any more, and in the dark they scraped out a hollow on the hill side, and collecting the bones of No Man and Strong Hand, placed them therein like the bones of brothers and covered them with earth and stones and tears.

All this time the babies, curled like hedgehogs, and twitching, had slept nose to nose in a sheltered place.

## THE PAGAN

They gripped each other with tiny paws, and would not let go.

“See,” said Maku, through her tears, “the little ones are already friends.”

“Let them be so,” said She Wolf, “and in order that we may not all perish, let us all go to your cave to live. You shall tend the cave and look to the children, and I will be the man and find food, for I am good at hunting.”

So they went to Maku’s cave.

“What is the girl’s name?” asked She Wolf.

## MAKU AND SHE WOLF

“We—she is not yet named,” said Maku.

“The man’s name is Sunrise,” said She Wolf, “because he came with the sun. Let us therefore call the girl Dawn, for I am minded to think that when they are well grown the sunrise will still follow the dawn.”



## CHAPTER XIII

### THE WEAKNESS OF MAKU

A NUMBER of years passed, and Maku kept the cave while She Wolf did the hunting. She Wolf was so occupied with the business of provider, meat-getter and fish-catcher, that she did not have time to think about any of the other business of life. But it was otherwise with Maku.

## THE WEAKNESS OF MAKU

There was not much for her to do after the children were weaned and she sat lazily in the sun and allowed her mind to run on old days.

It happened that a man began to hang about the cave. He had bright feathers in his hair, and whenever Maku looked at him, he blinked and nodded and showed his sharp white teeth, and sometimes she cast him a word and then he would boast and tell her of his mighty deeds.

Sometimes Maku dreamed about this man at night; but

## THE PAGAN

she put off going with him as long as she could, for that is the way with a woman. But one day she got to thinking about Strong Hand, and the caresses and the beatings that were equally sweet, and her blood began to run the more swiftly.

And she thought too, on the pains of labor which are so terrible that they are akin to a mighty joy, and of the downy little face that had snuggled in her bosom, and of the little hands that had gripped and tugged at her hair, and of

## THE WEAKNESS OF MAKU

the tiny voice that had piped in the night because of hunger.

And thinking of these things and remembering, she could not resist any longer. And the very next time the man presented himself before the cave she went with him, to be caressed, and to be beaten, and to find her happiness.

When She Wolf came back with the kill, the children ran out to meet her and they told breathlessly, and at one and the same time, how a

## THE PAGAN

man, adorned as to his head with bright feathers, had come and taken Maku away with him.

She Wolf was very tired, for the hunt had been long.

“It is well,” she said “for now there is one less mouth to feed.”





## CHAPTER XIV

### SUNRISE AND DAWN

**W**HEN the children were old enough, She Wolf took them with her on little hunts, and taught them the signs of the forest, and the ways of the beasts and as much as she knew of the ways of men.

Sunrise was an apt scholar, for he had the strength and hunting instincts of his

## THE PAGAN

mother, and all the cleverness, with none of the cowardice, which had distinguished his father. But Dawn did not take very kindly to the life into which she had been born.

As much as people of those times could be, she was a dreamer. She would pull out from a clear track to chase a butterfly, and she preferred wild raspberries to moose-meat, but then she was only a little child, and not very strong. This was a curious fact, considering her parentage.

## SUNRISE AND DAWN

She tired easily, and she had a habit of walking in the night and crooning to herself. Altogether she was a trying pupil and She Wolf rather despised her. But it was different with Sunrise.

As She Wolf had predicted, he followed Dawn, and was unhappy away from her. She Wolf gave up the chase, and Sunrise armed with his father's bow and arrows did the hunting for the cave.

A time came when the nice collection of flints which No Man had left behind him

## THE PAGAN

was almost entirely dispersed. Many of the flints had been broken, many lost and it behooved Sunrise to replenish the supply. So without saying anything to She Wolf he took his bow, some arrows with broken heads, and one good arrow for a model, and trotted off to old No Foot's workshop on the flinty hillside.



“Please,” said Sunrise, “I am nearly out of flints, and I must have new ones or else She Wolf and Dawn

## SUNRISE AND DAWN

will starve for want of meat.”

“Who are you to talk so big of hunting?” said No Foot, looking up.

“I am Sunrise, the son of No Man and She Wolf,” said Sunrise, “and I am hard put to it for flints.”

“And what do you offer me in exchange for my trouble and my flints.”

“For so many,” said Sunrise and he opened his right hand twice “I will give you as much moose-meat as I can bring hither in two trips.”

## THE PAGAN

“I do not lack for meat,” said No Foot, “offer me something else.”

“But I do not know of anything else to offer,” said Sunrise with a catch in his voice.

“What is that in your hand,” said No Foot and he indicated the bow.

“I do not know its name,” said Sunrise, “but with it I can strike things that are far off.”

No Foot took the bow in his hands but could make nothing of it.

## SUNRISE AND DAWN

“It is some childishness,” he said.

In the hillside at the base of a flinty boulder a chipmunk had his hole and was out sunning himself.

“If,” said Sunrise, “standing here I show you how to kill that chipmunk will you give me the flints.”

“If you strike him from here,” said No Foot, “you shall have them.”

Sunrise took his one good arrow and fitted it to the string. Then he drew it to

## THE PAGAN

the head, aimed a moment and let fly.

The flint point of the arrow struck a shower of sparks out of the flint boulder just above the chipmunk's head and the shaft was shattered into pieces. The chipmunk dove into his hole, unharmed.

Sunrise was ready to cry with vexation, but when he turned to No Foot, he saw that the old man's face was wrapped with wonder.

"I am old," said No Foot presently and slowly. "I have struck blows and I have

## SUNRISE AND DAWN

seen blows struck, but this blow was the most mighty."

"It was badly aimed," said Sunrise. "I am sorry, and it was my last good flint."

"Flints!" said No Foot. "Flints—you shall have flints. But strike me another blow—mighty one."

Again Sunrise smote the boulder mightily so that sparks flew, and the shaft was shivered.

"He shivers the shafts," said No Foot.

"My father, No Man, made this thing," said Sun-

## THE PAGAN


rise, "and now it is mine."

"I, too, will make one and again others," said No Foot, "and after this day, men will no longer hunt with spear and club. But to him who first makes these things great wealth will accrue, and because the thing is young and was your father's before you, you shall have half whatever men bring to me in exchange. Of what wood is it made?"

And so old No Foot got hold of the bow. But he improved upon it, both in workmanship and design, and

## SUNRISE AND DAWN

he waxed very rich, but he gave a fair half to Sunrise and many beautiful flints besides.





## CHAPTER XV

### FIRE

**S**UNRISE went away from No Foot's cave, and his mind was full of the sparks which his arrow head had struck from the boulder.

“They were like stars,” he told She Wolf, “only more bright; yet when I went to pick them up there was nothing. Nor could old No Foot instruct me, tho’ he

## FIRE

said that in working with flints he had often seen the like before." But She Wolf was not interested and Sunrise told the tale of the stars to Dawn, and she lent him both her ears, and opened her mouth besides.

It befell after this, that often when Sunrise had a flint that was damaged he would shoot it into a rock, for joy of seeing the sparks. And it must be confessed that sometimes, when the desire of the sparks was too heavy to bear, he would sacrifice a perfectly

## THE PAGAN

good arrow on the flinty altar of his passion. But that did not matter much, because Sunrise was now a very wealthy young man, and could afford to pay for his pleasure.

He had one other greatest pleasure in life and that was the scratching of pictures on bone.

She Wolf had carried away many of the best examples by



No Man from the old cave, and Sunrise had been brought up on this gallery. Many a rainy day he stayed

## FIRE

at home imagining scenes and etching them into the bone, while She Wolf and Dawn looked on and admired.

In time he excelled his father, and made the most wonderful pictures of which there was any record.

And so matters went on until the summer of the big dryness. That was a terrible time. No rain fell during the birth, life and death of two moons. The grass turned yellow and brown, the little brooks dried up completely, the rivers

## THE PAGAN

sank and became chains of pools, the pools sank and retreated from each other, game became scarce, the wild raspberries and blackberries and strawberries did not come to full fruition because of the lack of water, and the struggle for existence became fierce and intolerable.

But Sunrise was quite happy, for he had just discovered that any two flints struck together with violence emitted stars, and wherever he went, he carried two flints to be his solace in the heat

## FIRE

of the noon. It was no longer necessary to sacrifice good arrows. One day he halted for rest in a valley not far from the caves of his tribe, and taking his flints, one in each hand, fell to striking them lustily.

As luck would have it the sparks fell on a bed of tinder-dry, dusty white lichen, and made black marks on it.

This interested Sunrise and he struck again and again. Then he examined the black marks and wondered at the why and the wherefore.

## THE PAGAN

Of a sudden he noticed that one of the marks was growing—it spread rapidly in all directions, and its edges curled upward and were red. Then a gust of wind whirled up the valley and the whole bed of lichen burst into flame. Sunrise tried to catch the flames in his hands, and sprang away with a yelp, for it seemed as if a snake had bitten him. The flames sprang into a bush and roared. Sunrise backed away holding his hands before his face. The wind and the flames seemed

## FIRE

to increase together. The whole side of the valley began to burn, brightly and fiercely, the flames leaped up creepers and among the branches of trees, and the roaring of them increased in power. And Sunrise, held by wonder and driven by fear, backed slowly away; but fire and the fierce heat rushed at him and billows of smarting smoke swept over him and presently he turned and ran for his life. And the fire that he had kindled, snapped and roared on his trail.



## CHAPTER XVI

### THE FLIGHT OF THE TRIBE

**P**ANTING he bade She  
Wolf and Dawn leave  
the cave and run till they  
could run no further, and he  
dashed from cave to cave  
and called upon his people  
to run for their lives.

And the people looking to  
the southward beheld the  
black smoke and heard the  
roaring of the fire, and  
snatching up whatever was

## THE FLIGHT OF THE TRIBE

dear to them, turned and fled howling into the North.

There was no cave to which Sunrise did not run and when he had visited the last cave of all, he struck out in a great circle, until he crossed the trail of She Wolf and Dawn and then he followed, running at full speed, crouching, and frenzied both with wonder and with fear.

He overtook slower runners, men overladen, women with children, little children—and his heart became sick

## THE PAGAN


and heavy as he ran, for he knew that in that hunt many must be overtaken. And he knew that the fault was his.

For the slow there was no mercy. The oldest, the youngest and the dearest possessions were abandoned to the rapid fire. With despair, dormant instinct came to life. For men sought safety in the tops of trees, and fell presently to the ground charred and shrivelled.

No Foot, trailing his crushed foot after him was one of the first to start into

## THE FLIGHT OF THE TRIBE

the North, but he went at a snail's pace, and was soon distanced by the others.

The old man's arms were full of unfinished bows, and his good tools  and his precious flints. He walked along, limping at the very tail of the procession, and gradually dropping further and further behind.

And after a little as he was stumping along and dragging his crushed foot after him, the fire caught up with him and threw him on his face, and passed on.

## THE PAGAN

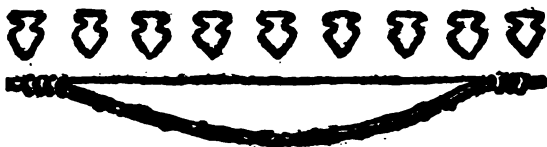
So many thousands of years after No Foot died, that we may not even guess at their number, men digging for a railroad came upon a skeleton lying face down upon a pile of half finished flints.

The left foot of the skeleton was curiously twisted and deformed; but presently, on being exposed to the air, the bones turned to powder and nothing remained but the flints. At first the men thought that they had opened a prehistoric grave; but con-

## THE FLIGHT OF THE TRIBE

sidering that the skeleton was lying face downward, in a sprawling attitude, and that the flints upon which it lay, were but half finished and were charred by fire, something like the truth dawned upon the workmen, and they wondered over their cans of noonday food what manner of man the lame flint maker had been and what life had been like in the old days.

But we know that the lame flint maker was old No Foot, and that first, last and always he was a good workman.



## CHAPTER XVII

### COLD AND HEAT

**A**LL that were left of the tribe, foot sore and uncomprehending, came at length to rest on a high and barren plateau.

Miles behind them, to the southward, the fire still raged on their trail. East and West as far as the eye could travel, black smoke poured upward, but thro' and above the smoke

## COLD AND HEAT

to the westward, the heavens flamed with the glory of the setting sun.

To the North, the whole country pitched barrenly downward, and then became an undulating level bare of trees and water courses; beyond this desert expanse, rose a barren of purple mountains capped with snow.

It was not until he reached the plateau that Sunrise came up with She Wolf and Dawn. She Wolf was keeping an anxious eye out for him; but Dawn, broken with fatigue,

## THE PAGAN

had thrown herself face downward and was asleep.

Sunrise, sick with grief, greeted She Wolf, and went about counting heads. Many had been overladen in that hunt; old men, women and children. One Eye had saved his skin, but Moon Face had perished with his riches. Maku was missing, and No Foot, and there were many others.

Sunrise urged this man and that to travel forward in the night, and put the miles between them, and the

## COLD AND HEAT

hunter flames, but altho' it was bitter cold on the plateau, he could persuade no one to move.

The tribe was so tired that it could hardly stand up. Men, women and children came close together for warmth, and in a tangled huddle prepared to pass the night. It became colder, and the stars began to appear here and there in the heavens.

The fire advanced upon the base of the plateau, and Sunrise raged at the people, who cuddling against each

## THE PAGAN

other for warmth, sat stupidly and regarded it.

But, in spite of his rage, he cuddled with them for the cold was now intense. He sat and reflected upon the roaring and vindictive enemy which he had aroused, and the cold increased. He recalled the warmth of the fire in his face, and he would have given something for a little of that warmth to stretch his hands against.

“And yet,” he said to himself, “in a little I shall be running at full speed from

## COLD AND HEAT

that same warmth. It will not be long before the sons of my stars come raging and roaring up the side of this hill, clearing the rocks and the earth, and the moss and whatsoever is on the hill. And yet the warmth was pleasant."

His spine twisted him with a shiver. "If there were water here," he said, "it would be turned into stone by the cold."

All of a sudden one of the women fell to howling and beating her breasts; and the

## THE PAGAN

rest knew some one had died. It was the woman's son, a boy, nearly a year old, whom she had lugged all the way from the caves. The cold had killed him.

“Be still, woman!” said old One Eye, coughing. “In a little we shall all be dead either from the heat yonder or the cold here. Beat your breasts as much as you wish for that will warm you; but do not howl, for some of us are weary, and wish very much to sleep.”

So the woman's howl be-

## COLD AND HEAT

came a whimper, but she continued to beat her breasts. And the night went on, and the child lay frozen at her feet.

• And now far below them, two thousand feet and more, the fire glowed in broken curves along the base of the plateau: but beyond that it did not seem to advance. The night wind blowing in the reverse direction rolled the smoke back upon its tracks and kept the view clear.

“Better the warmth than the cold,” said Sunrise, and

## THE PAGAN

his teeth chattered. "I am going down the hill to warm myself. Who comes?"

But the fear of the fire was on the people, and they whimpered and whined and smote themselves, and told him that he was mad and would be killed. He could not budge them.

"In a little," said old One Eye, "we shall be rested and have strength to go on—but not back."

"Then I go alone," said Sunrise, and he arose and called his mother by name.

## COLD AND HEAT

"I am here," answered She Wolf, "but I think the girl is dead, for she is cold to touch and will not answer."

Sunrise fell as tho' his belly had been filled with stones, so heavy was his dread.

He knelt by Dawn and felt of her and listened for her breath. He could feel her heart beating feebly against the palm of his hand, but she was very cold.

He gathered her in his arms, and strode down the hill toward the fire. She

## THE PAGAN

Wolf limped behind, (a thorn had pierced her foot) beating her breasts and whimpering. But with every step of the descent the air became warmer and in their faces was a pleasant glow from the fire.

A number of hundred feet from the fire they halted, for the heat was becoming too great to bear. Sunrise bade his mother sit and he laid Dawn in her arms.

“She will not die,” he said. Then with his hands before his face, he descended further. And for a very long

## COLD AND HEAT

time he stood peering between his fingers and observing the actions of the fire. Suddenly he cried aloud for joy and turning bounded up the hill to where his mother sat with Dawn in her arms.

“It does not eat the stones,” he cried, “nor the earth—I have watched a long time and it has not come forward by the breadth of my arm. It springs only upon trees and bushes and things which grow.”

“Then we are safe here!” said She Wolf.

✓

## THE PAGAN

“We are safe, and warm,” said Sunrise, and he felt of Dawn.

“Dawn!” He said, “Dawn!”

She opened her eyes and smiled upon him.

“Are you warm now?” he said. “Are you warm?”

“I am warm,” she said, “but very weary and it may be hungry.”

“Sleep, then,” he said, “for there is no food, and in the morning there will be a hunt.”

Then, his heart light with

## COLD AND HEAT

happiness, he turned and ran up the hill. In his absence two more children had died of the cold.

“O people!” he cried. “Below there is warmth and safety, for the stones and the earth fighting for us have turned back the mighty hunter who sought to devour us.”

The querulous voice of One Eye was heard in answer.

“Be still! Sunrise,” he said. “This is as good a place for dying as any.

## THE PAGAN

Furthermore, we are weary, and some of us wish very much to sleep."

"You at least," said Sunrise furiously, "shall not die here, for I shall drag you down the hill by the hair of your head and with such force that you will die on the way . . . Who follows me?"

But the people only whimpered.

Sunrise caught up a spear and brought down the handle on the nearest back.

"You shall not follow."

## COLD AND HEAT

he cried in a mighty voice.  
“You shall go before, and I  
will drive you.”

And he fell upon them  
with the handle of the spear.  
Now the people, up to the  
boldest hunter among them,  
were numb with cold and  
had no fight in them.

So the fear of Sunrise fell  
upon them, and they went  
before him like herded sheep.  
And he kept smiting the backs  
of those who brought up the  
rear.

Old One Eye was not one  
of these. Indeed he was one

## THE PAGAN

of those who led the route.

When they came to where She Wolf and Dawn lay sleeping in the warmth, Sunrise left off beating them, and they settled down with their hands before their faces.

Delicious warmth crept into the icy crannies of their bones, and they slept.



## CHAPTER XVIII

### THE DEATH OF ONE EYE

**F**ROM now on Sunrise was the leader of his people. They never got over the bullying which he gave them, when they were numb and empty of fight. He only had to command and he was obeyed; only once was there anything like grumbling.

They crossed the plateau,

## THE PAGAN

and descended into the barren plains upon the other side. Here night overtook them; and as before a bitter frost threatened them with death. It was then that they grumbled. At least, they said, they might have remained by the fire and have died warm, and they cursed Sunrise for having disturbed them. Sunrise retorted that they were little children and not hunters, chipmunks but not men, four-footed do-nothings who were a stench in his nostrils.

## THE DEATH OF ONE EYE


Then he went apart in bitterness and gathering lichens and moss and sage brush, made a heap, and placed rocks about the heap in a circle.

He struck flints together, and after no little toil, kindled a fire, and they, sitting about it were warmed and comforted, and held their hands before their faces and wondered.

Game was very scarce in the plains, but after a number of days, thirsty, and half starved, Sunrise led his people in among the foothills

## THE PAGAN

of the purple mountains with the snow tops.

There the gullies and the natural runways were pricked thick with the tracks of  moose, elk, deer, and bear, streams were abundant, teeming with trout, and best of all, for the tribe was a forest tribe, the whole country was covered with splendid trees.

Men, women and children fell to burrowing out homes in the hillsides. Long Arm, a disciple of old No Foot, gathered sea-green flint and set

## THE DEATH OF ONE EYE

up a workshop; Hunch Back, his son, established himself near at hand and went in for manufacture of bows; Fish Catch, the nephew of Fish Catch, collected tough fibres and began the intricate knitting of nets; and Sunrise in an open rocky place experimented with fire, and brought it under complete control.

One day as Sunrise, with smarting eyes, sat feeding his fire, a little boy no higher than a man's waist, came trotting up with the roughest kind of a bowl shaped of

## THE PAGAN

grey white clay in his hands.

“See what I have made, Sunrise,” he said.

“But what is the use of it?” said Sunrise.

“I wish to lay it near your fire,” said the little boy, “for that will make it hard and then it will hold water. The sun at this season is not hot enough to do this.”

“What is your name?” said Sunrise, “for you seem very thoughtful, for so little a child.”

“I have no name,” said the child.

## THE DEATH OF ONE EYE

“I will call you, Shaper,” said Sunrise, “for you have taken clay and shaped it; not foolishly as it is customary for little children to do, but with a purpose.”


They baked the bowl before the fire, and it became hard and brittle, and altho’ parts about the edges of it crumbled, leaving it very shapeless, they found on trial that it would hold water.

“I will teach you,” said Sunrise, “how to take care of a fire of your own. You shall make many things of

## THE PAGAN

this kind and I will see to it that people give you valuable presents in exchange. For I think that after this when a man wakes in the night and is thirsty, it will be possible for him to drink without running to the river for the water."

When the shaper had been taught how to build and tend a fire, he started a little workshop near the place where



he had found the clay, and worked busily at the making and baking of bowls. And

## THE DEATH OF ONE EYE

in both branches of trade he made astonishing progress.

But this shaper was a remarkable child, for no sooner was he an adept at the making of bowls than he wearied of it, and would sooner have starved than make any more. But for that matter he was not in the least bent on starving. So what did he do, but take two disciples of his own age, teach them the craft, lie all day sleeping in the warmth of the fire, and, to use a modernism, pocketing four-

## THE PAGAN

fifths of the profits. He became so fat and lazy that he could hardly walk, and at the age of twelve was already annoying the women with his attentions.

The tribe was more comfortable than ever it had been before. Bows and arrows supplied game, bowls full of cold water stood handy in every cave, and as the season advanced in severity fires were kindled and kept going.

One day Sunrise went to One Eye's cave bearing a gift of venison. This was after

## THE DEATH OF ONE EYE

the first snow, and the weather was bitterly cold. In front of One Eye's cave was a cheery fire, and in the cave itself lay the old man dead. He had died in the night of his great age and of the cold.

Now this is deserving of mention. That when One Eye fled from the great fire, he carried with him but one treasure, and that was neither club, nor spear, nor bow, nor net, but the flat bone upon which his own glorious deeds had been recorded by the clever fingers of No Man.

## THE PAGAN

At no time had his weariness or suffering been so great as to make him part with this heavy article. Now he lay dead with the bone clenched in his frozen hands.

“One Eye is dead and done with,” said Sunrise, musing. “There is no woman to howl over him. He will never see with his one eye any more. He will not hear the sounds of the forest any more; nor will he lick his lips at the smell of meat.”

“When we have brought down the roof of his cave

## THE DEATH OF ONE EYE

upon him, he will be hidden to the eye, and forgotten by the mind. Yet I am told that he was once the swiftest of all runners, a mighty hunter and a striker of terrible blows. These things and others which are true and untrue have been recorded on this bone which even in death he clings to."

"The hands which kindled this fire are dead and in a little the fire too will be dead for want of nourishment. Yet if I throw wood upon it, it will live, and if I had the will I could keep it alive, as long as

## THE PAGAN

my own life lasted, and afterward my son could do likewise and after him his son."

"Thus many years after old One Eye had become powdered bone in a filled up cave, the fire which he started, would still be burning. And it might happen that one, half dead of the cold, should be laid before that fire and brought back to life. And would that be the work of him who lies here without breath or motion, or would it be my work who gave food to the fire when it was dying, or

## THE DEATH OF ONE EYE

would it be the work of my son, or of him who brought the half dead one and laid him in the warmth?"

Such were the thoughts that passed thro' the mind of Sunrise, tho' he did not say them out in words as I have done. He simply stood and wondered about death, and that is one of the reasons that man has become man. Like the other animals he accepted all things, but unlike them, he wondered about them, and asked questions.

Sunrise bent and regarded

## THE PAGAN

the fire closely. Then he thrust his hand into it, and laughed.

“Food will not recover it now,” he said, “for it is dead, and that is the end of One Eye.”



## CHAPTER XIX

### THE COURTING OF DAWN

**W**HEN Sunrise got back to his cave, he found She Wolf sitting alone by the fire.

“Where is Dawn?” he said, for She Wolf was not first in his affections.

“She has gone to fish thro’ the ice,” said She Wolf, “and she will return soon.”

“I have just found One

## THE PAGAN

Eye dead in his cave," said Sunrise.

"It is well," said She Wolf, "for now there is one less mouth to feed."

"One mouth more or less matters little."

"What you think, I think," said She Wolf, "and therefore as you say a mouth or two more in this cave would not matter."

"Whom do you wish to bring to this cave?" said Sunrise.

"I wish you and Dawn to bring the extra mouth," said She.

## THE COURTING OF DAWN

“I do not understand,”  
said Sunrise.

“The matter is simple,”  
said She Wolf, “and Dawn  
will not say no to you.”

Sunrise sat and thought.

“There is a time for all  
things,” he said presently,  
“Hitherto I have been very  
busy with a number of things.  
But I have always intended  
one day to make a cave of  
my own and take Dawn to it.  
For always when I am away  
from her there is a something  
which keeps calling me back  
to her side. But she is very

## THE PAGAN

young still, and not strong,  
and I will wait."

"You are of an age," said She Wolf, "and even if you are willing to wait, I know of others that are not willing?"

"Who?" said Sunrise suspiciously.

"Dawn," said She Wolf.

"You spoke of others."

"When you are at a distance," said She Wolf, "certain young men, sticking bright feathers in their hair, come and hang about this cave."

## THE COURTING OF DAWN

“They do, do they,” said Sunrise angrily. “And what do they want.”

“It may be that they want me,” said his mother with a grin, “but I do not think so. Listen then. Whenever Dawn shows herself, these young men, fall to blinking and nodding their heads and showing their teeth—.”

“I will kill them,” cried Sunrise and he reached for his bow.

“There is an easier way.”

“Name it.”

“Take her yourself.”

## THE PAGAN

“Tell me one thing,” said Sunrise, “does she throw looks and words to these young men.”

“She does not,” said She Wolf.

“Then,” said Sunrise, “I will not kill them, and when the spring comes, I will hollow a cave and take Dawn to live in it. But now the ground is like stone and no man may dig it. Furthermore it is customary to wait until the spring. Let these things be understood.”

When Sunrise saw Dawn

## THE COURTING OF DAWN

coming up from the river with her catch, he knew that she must be cold. Therefore he threw sticks and brush upon the fire so that it shot upward and gave out delicious warmth.

“Behold!” said Dawn, “I have caught three fishes, one for each. But they are very little.”

“You are a mighty fisher,” said Sunrise, “and when we have a cave of our own, you shall do the fishing and the hunting, while I lie in the sun or before the fire.”

## THE PAGAN

Thus in a bantering voice  
Sunrise proposed to Dawn.

And she turned away her  
face and was silenced. And  
thus she accepted him. She  
Wolf took the fish and went  
aside to clean them.

“It will be in the spring,”  
said Sunrise, “when the earth  
is soft for digging and the  
leaves are green on the trees.  
Are you willing?”

She turned and looked him  
full in the face.

“I am willing,” she said.  
Her eyes clung to his and  
his to hers. He tried to

## THE COURTING OF DAWN

He could not speak but his voice choked in his throat, and for the first time in his life, desire like a flame swept him from head to heel. And mingled with the desire was a nameless shrinking and terror—a shrinking from himself and a terror of Dawn.

He mastered himself and spoke in a thick voice.

“Dawn,” he said, “after this I will hunt for this cave, and collect wood for this fire, but I will not live here any more.”

## THE PAGAN

He rose and went silently into the forest.

“Where is he going,” asked She Wolf from a distance.

He is not going to live in this cave any more,” said Dawn. “But he will come every day and bring us meat and wood for the fire.”

Then She Wolf chuckled and went on cleaning the fish, but Dawn ran into the cave and hid herself.



## CHAPTER XX

### SUNRISE DIGS A CAVE

**S**UNRISE went to the cave of Fish Catch—a young man a few years older than himself, who was so ugly that no woman would have him, and who therefore lived alone. Fish Catch was busy with a net.

“Fish Catch,” said Sunrise, “may I live with you until spring? I will see that

## THE PAGAN

you do not lack for food.”

Now in winter when the rivers were frozen people did not have very much use for nets, and Fish Catch consequently was often hard put to it for food. Therefor this proposal met with his entire approval, and he said so.

“But what,” he said, “is the matter with your own cave?”

“It is a small cave at best,” said Sunrise, “and we were crowded.”

Fish Catch laughed cynically. He thought it not

## SUNRISE DIGS A CAVE

unlikely that Dawn had taken a club to Sunrise and driven him away from her. But he was afraid to say so openly.

One day Sunrise killed a bear and he hastened to She Wolf and Dawn, taking the four feet with him. Usually he did not return from the hunting till dark, but on this occasion he had killed early and was back by noon.

Squatting in the snow in front of the cave, he saw two young bachelors with bright feathers stuck in their hair. They were waiting for Dawn

## THE PAGAN

to come out. Sunrise strode up to them in a fury.

“Be off!” he cried, “I will have none of this. Let me catch you making eyes at Dawn and I will strike to kill. Let this be clearly understood.”

They saw the fury in his eye and scuttled off.

“Do not come within shouting distance of this cave,” he shouted after them, “for the sound or sight of you is not to be borne.”

She Wolf, sitting in the

## SUNRISE DIGS A CAVE

mouth of the cave, chuckled and grinned.

“They are always here,” she said.

Sunrise turned on her fiercely.

“Are you, too, against me?” he cried. “Faugh—you have a bow and arrows. Use them.”

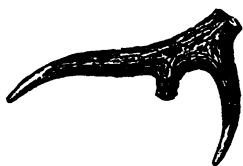
“The next time they come,” said his mother in a conciliating voice, “I will use the bow and the arrows.”

But she did not. Nor the next time—nor the next time—nor the next.

## THE PAGAN

But Sunrise went away  
appeased.

And when the frost went  
out of the ground he selected  
the side of a hill where the  
sun smote from early morn-  
ing till late afternoon and  
fell to burrowing and dig-



ging a splendid  
cave, which  
was to be the  
very largest  
and most splendid cave of  
which there was any record  
up to that time.

But the work progressed  
slowly, for he was obliged

## SUNRISE DIGS A CAVE

to hunt betimes, and the cave was to be of splendid proportions. It was not finished until the spring was well advanced.

Tall violets stood by the brooks, flowers crowded between stones, and grew over the open places, trees, bushes, hills, valleys and forests were misty with new green.

Sunrise arose in the sparkling dawn and took up his bow and his arrows. Birds were trilling in the forest.

## THE PAGAN

“To-day,” he said, “I will hunt, and to-night—to-night—.”

Then he ran into the forest laughing and singing.

The sun was going down when Sunrise presented himself joyously before the cave where She Wolf and Dawn lived. But when he called to them, they did not answer, and when he went into the cave, he found that She Wolf had been shot unto death, and that Dawn had vanished away.

Sunrise knelt by his mother and called her by name and

## SUNRISE DIGS A CAVE

felt of her. And presently by the coldness of her body he knew she had been dead a long time.

He went out of the cave and ran in a great circle. After a little he came upon the trail of Dawn and a man. and it pointed away from the caves of the tribe and was straight, like the flight of an arrow.

But Sunrise flung himself along the trail, and all night he ran like a wolf.

“They will not dare stop,” he said, “and it may be

## THE PAGAN

that I shall not be too late."

With the first light he came to a flowery, grassy glade in the forest. But the grass was greatly trampled and many of the flowers were broken, for there had been a terrible struggle in that place. And Sunrise read the signs of it as we read printed words in a book.

"She fought against him," he cried, "she fought against him!"

He smiled a little then and looked upward, but after that

## SUNRISE DIGS A CAVE

in his life he was to smile  
but once more.

He lay face downward,  
digging and tearing at the  
ground until the nails of his  
fingers were broken and  
bloody.

Birds sang and the sun  
rose.



## CHAPTER XXI

### THE TRAIL OF TWO

**S**UNRISE ran in a great circle and found where the trail of Dawn and the man left the grassy glade, and bending to the right, wound along among the foothills of the mountains.

“One runs faster than two,” said Sunrise, “and there is now no need of hurry.”

## THE TRAIL OF TWO

And he thought of what he would do when he caught up with them.

He was now in the complete possession of his abilities, calm deliberate and constructive.

By stepping in the man's tracks Sunrise was able to calculate his stride and the speed at which he had been going.

"It is little better than a walk," he said, "and if I run slowly, I shall gain fast."

Running, therefore, slowly, he suddenly stopped all

## THE PAGAN

a-quiver, for he smelt blood. There was a little splash of it on the leaves of a young moose-wood. Sunrise considered the blood to mean this:

“Dawn,” he said, “does not go willingly, the man is forcing her to run ahead of him, and here he found it necessary to prick her with his spear. She is still fighting against him,” he said, and that surmise shot a pitiful little spasm of joy into his sick heart. He ran on.

“After a time,” he reflected, “the man will be

## THE TRAIL OF TWO

obliged to hunt. It may be that I shall find Dawn bound to a tree waiting for his return. In that case I, too, will wait for his return. But lest he smell me out I will take up the next fresh moose dung that I find and smear myself with it."

In the cool bottom of a valley Sunrise found a confusion of tracks. Two sets led from the valley and one set led in the reverse direction, that is, back to it.

"They passed this place and went on," said Sunrise.

## THE PAGAN

“Then they came back, then they turned and went on again.”

He thought hard and when he had puzzled it out he laughed a short, harsh laugh.

“The man,” he said, made up his mind to hunt, but, being a fool, he either did not tie Dawn to a tree or he tied her like a fool and she broke loose. As soon as he had gone, she followed the trail backward, running as hard as she could, for see these return tracks are far apart. The man, coming back from the

## THE TRAIL OF TWO

hunt, found that she had gone, and followed. Here he caught up with her and made her turn again. But he had to prick her with his spear to make her go—see, here is more blood. I am not far behind.”

The solution proved correct, and Sunrise even found the thongs with which Dawn had been insecurely bound, and the tree which the man had selected to bind her to; the bark here and there was stained darkly.

## THE PAGAN

After this he increased his pace.

“Dawn,” he said presently, “is growing weak for she no longer steps out steadily. It is probable that she will die of her wounds and of her weariness, and it is better so. But I would like to speak with her before she dies, for she is little more than a child.”

Sunrise was very hungry, and being now sure of his quarry, he stopped to hunt, and when he had killed, he ate, but sparingly, drank deep.

## THE TRAIL OF TWO

and slept for a few hours. He rose greatly refreshed, and taking a lump of meat with him, ran swiftly on into the night.

Toward morning he was aware that Dawn and the man were increasing their pace. But Dawn had begun to run very unsteadily, and in two places the trail showed where she had tripped and fallen.

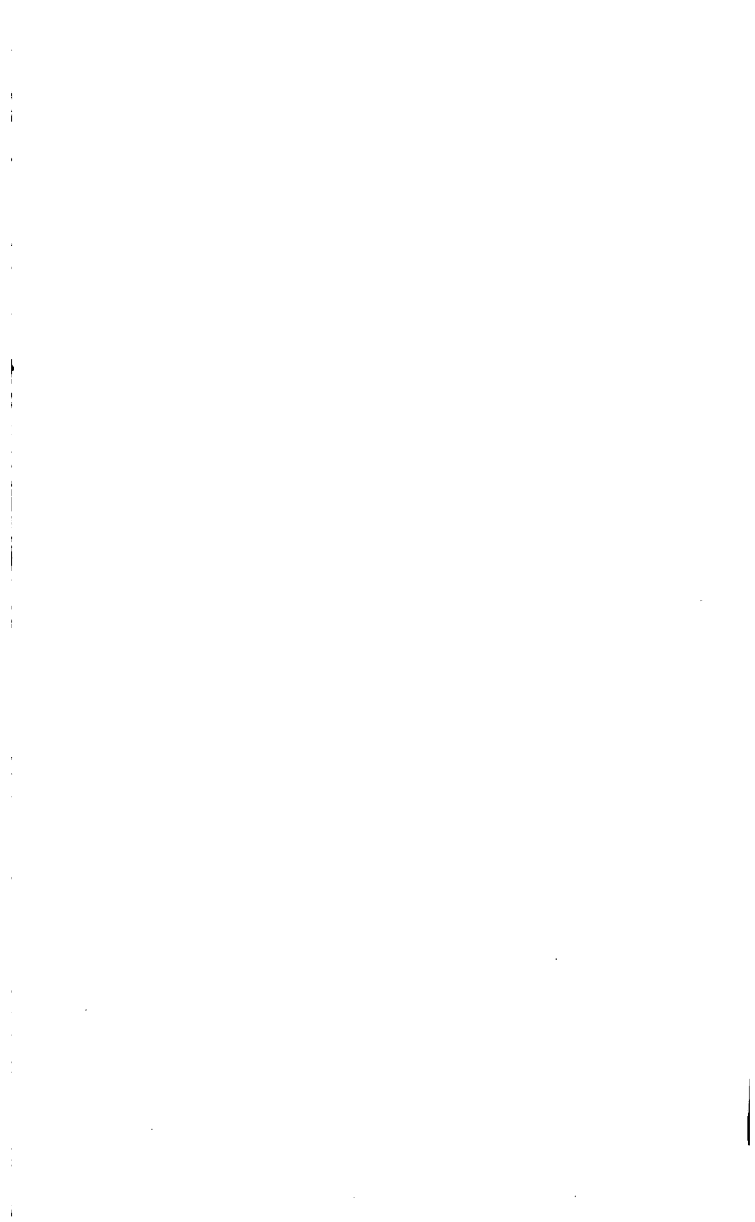
“He knows that I am on his trail,” said Sunrise, “and his belly is cold with fear. Soon he will leave the woman and go on alone, but

## THE PAGAN

he will not get away. And it were better for him that he had not been born. I am minded to do things with him that have never been done to any man before."

But it was not until noon that he came upon Dawn in the place where the man had deserted her. She called to him before he saw her, tho' he already knew that she was near. And what she called to him was this:

"I fought against him, Sunrise—I fought against him."





**SHE SOBBED IN HIS ARMS**

## THE TRAIL OF TWO

He knelt by her, his eyes swimming with tears and pity, and fondled her and comforted her.

“Here is meat,” he said, “only live till I return from this hunt, and I will look after you.”

“You will take me—even now,” she said.

“Even now,” said Sunrise, “for the fault is not yours. And between us two it shall be as tho’ this thing had never happened.”

She sobbed in his arms.

## THE PAGAN

“Only live,” he said.  
“Only live—and I will return as soon as I may.”

As he turned tenderly from her, and shot along the trail, it seemed to Dawn that Sunrise was shining with strength and beauty.

All that afternoon he ran, and all that night, and even to him it seemed wonderful that it should be so. His breath came and went softly like that of a sleeping child, his muscles were like those of a man who has eaten and drunk and slept deep. There

## THE TRAIL OF TWO

was no labor in his movements. He was like a fire that feeds on its own progress. He was running on the tireless feet of love and hate.

In the morning, he came out on a cup-like and barren plain that was between the foothills of the mountains and the mountains themselves, and a mile before him, running on the feet of fear, waist deep in the white mist of the morning, he saw the man.



## CHAPTER XXII

### THE TRAIL OF ONE

**F**EAR and hate and love eats up the miles even as the sun eats up the white mist of the morning. But the distance that was between the two men neither increased nor diminished; it became terribly hot, and the going was arduous. Tough, spiky bushes covered the plain to the height of a man's knee

## THE TRAIL OF ONE

but they seemed less to grow out of the deep, shifting dust, than to be stuck into it.

The progress the men made was rather by a succession of leaps than by straight running. It was like trying to make speed over an unequal beach covered with knee-deep water, and it told upon them fearfully.

A hot wind was blowing with fierce gusts. Sometimes it sent spinning columns of dust high into the air, and with the same breath destroyed them and hurled the dust

## THE PAGAN

fragments into the faces of the men. Now and again, above the gusting of the wind, the pulseless, clicking, singing signals of rattle snakes could be heard.

As the day advanced, black clouds shot with lightning began to bank up in the West, and thunder no louder than the purring of a cat made itself heard. And still the men staggered on, but their speed now was no more than that of a fast walk.

Their throats and the roofs of their mouths were as if

## THE TRAIL OF ONE

calcined by fire; their eyes were red, burnt and dry. And those two valiant feet of Sunrise, Hate and Love, began to doubt each other. "It may be," they said, that Fear is stronger than we." But they went on, bleeding and bruised. And it was not otherwise with the feet of Fear. "We are done for," they said. But they went on.

And now the black, thunder-bearing clouds, rushing up from the west, came between the sun and the

## THE PAGAN

plain, darkened the bushes and the dust and the figures of the men. But the heat did not diminish. And the men crept on.

Between them the distance was now no more than the half of a mile. Their pace had become that of children learning to walk. But of the two children Sunrise was the more advanced in walking. And the world grew darker, the wind began to howl, and a continuous cloud of stinging dust smote into their faces.

## THE TRAIL OF ONE

There was no longer any blue sky, for the black thunder clouds had covered it from one horizon to the other, and the mountains themselves were hidden. The plain was like the floor of a great dark cave, and in the midst of it were two little children that stumbled forward, staggered, fell, and rose again. But Hate and Love was stronger than their brother Fear, and he staggered to more purpose, and he did not fall so often.

## THE PAGAN

And presently he began to call upon Fear to stop and face him.

It was then that the whole cave was filled with a blue glare that shook and was more bright than the light of the sun. And at the same moment there was a detonation of thunder, more loud and terrible than the falling-in upon themselves of mountains. And the hearts of the men stood still in their breasts.

And long after the darkness had closed in again, their

## THE TRAIL OF ONE

eyes were filled with the shaking blue glare, and their ears with the thunder.

There was a long hush—even the wind ceased. Then again the glare—but more bright, and again the thunder, but more terrible. And glare followed glare, and the thunder became continuous, and the wind came with redoubled fury, and the dust rose in clouds and hid the men, the one from the other.

Then came the rain, but not in drops and jets. Its fall was more like that of a

## THE PAGAN

solid, and the whole earth rose in smoke to meet it. The blackness was now like the blackness of night, and a man could no longer see the distance that is between two trees standing in a thick forest.

Sunrise lay upon his face, and sobbed in the storm, for he made sure that his vengeance would escape him. He did not feel the cold rain on his parched body; he no longer feared the lighting and the thunder. Time and again he rose and tried to pierce

## THE TRAIL OF ONE

the blackness of the storm.  
But the man was hidden.

Now the curtain of the elements that was breaking the heart of one man, was as a mighty stimulant to the feet of the other, and he made a crafty turn and went forward.

The rain and the cool refreshed him and he made sure that he would escape.

But he was too crafty by a half, for he lost his way in that storm, and after a little, with triumphant and relieved heart, he staggered straight into the place, that of all

## THE PAGAN

places in the world he was most anxious to avoid. And that was the place where Hate and Love stood with Dispair and sought to pierce the storm.

A few feet away, through the smoking deluge of the rain, Sunrise saw the crouching figure of a man. It was outlined in a white steam, and was coming on. At first Sunrise could not realize that it was The Man. When he did he smiled peacefully and he stepped forward, and taking the man gently by the

## THE TRAIL OF ONE

shoulder turned his face upward and looked upon it long, and quietly.

When the man felt the hand on his shoulder, and saw the face that regarded him, hope that had sustained him perished. His fingers twitched foolishly, and after a little, he sobbed once, and shivered and was still. Then he collapsed and fell.

Sunrise sat down beside him.

“We must rest for a while,” said Sunrise, “I have not now the strength to do that

## THE PAGAN

which I have come to do."

The man nodded.

And after that, for a long time, no word was spoken and no sign made.

The man lay on the ground breathing hard, and Sunrise sat beside him. The rain fell drenchingly upon them. About them the storm raged, and above.

"Put your feet close together," said Sunrise, when he was rested enough. "I am going to tie you."

So the man put his feet close together, and Sunrise

## THE TRAIL OF ONE

bound them with the thongs that had bound Dawn. "Now lie on your breast," said Sunrise, "and cross your hands upon your back." And he bound the hands.

Sunrise turned the man over, and after that the man kept his eyes on Sunrise, to see what he was minded to do.

For hours screams pierced the storm, and could be heard above thunder.



## CHAPTER XXIII

### THE LONG TRAIL

**S**UNRISE, carrying his bow and arrows, toiled over the plain heavy with the recent rain. The sun shone strongly and the sky was blue. Behind him the snow capped mountains glistened in the bright light, before him a barrier of lofty forest, fresh and green, marked the termination of the

## THE LONG TRAIL

plain. He was bent low to the ground, and extreme exhaustion marked his going. His hands and forearms were dark and clotted with that which was drying on them.

“If she will only live till I come,” he said, “if she will only live till I come.”

The sun blazed; the feet of the man were springless; his eyes, deep sunken, burned like red coals.

“If she will only live till I come,” he said, “if she will only live till I come.”

## THE PAGAN

He was following the back-trail by memory and instinct, for the rain had wiped all signs of the pursuit from the face of the earth. At times Sunrise thought of what he was leaving behind him; at times of the work that was still to do.

These two thoughts, so opposite that it was paradoxical for them to be contained in one skull, supported him thro the cruel toil of his going.

When he came to the forest it was wet and green

## THE LONG TRAIL

and full of bird singing: for at this time the birds were mating and it seemed sweet to them.

That day he killed, ate greatly and drank deep. After which he slept; and there was no log in the forest which lay more still. It was as tho he had died.

In the night wolves came and sniffed at him and could hardly believe the noses which told them that he was alive and not for them. In the morning he came to life, and tho still aching in every

## THE PAGAN

bone, took up the back-trail at the trot.

The going was easier in the forest and more secure, for there the rain had not fallen so violently, and the tracks were still visible—his own tracks and the tracks of those feet which would not press into moss any more. He went on all that day, and the next night.

He came at length to the place where he had left Dawn, but she was not there. He knew that she would not

## THE LONG TRAIL

be, and yet somehow his heart sank.

“She had no weapons,” he said. “Furthermore she was very weak and it may be that the meat was not sufficient.”

For an hour or more, running swiftly, he followed a winding and rambling trail.

“She was searching for food,” he said, “but at this season there are no berries, and she was without weapons.”

The trail finally turned abruptly downward into a gully filled with young trees.

## THE PAGAN

from whose midst could be heard the chattering of a brook.

Sunrise paused on the brink. His head sank on his chest; his muscles relaxed. He all but dropped his bow. As he stood thus the days of his youth went from him forever.

“I shall find her below,” he said presently, “but she will not speak to me. I have been too long in coming.”

He descended into the gully, slowly, like one in a dream.

## THE LONG TRAIL

She had died among the violets by the brook, and she was not yet cold. In her hand was a branch of birch half stripped of its leaves; for she had eaten them to stave off starvation.

He sat for a long time with her head on his knees. "I should have stayed with you, Dawn," he said. "I should have let the man go."

And later.

"There will never be any solace to me in thinking of what I have done. My cave will be always empty now.

## THE PAGAN

There will be no son to cling to my fingers with his little hands. There will be nothing for me now. For I shall always be finding you silent among the violets by the brook."

For a long time the strong man was shaken with sobs, so that it seemed as if they would kill him. After that a kind of exaltation possessed him and he saw visions of her. Wherever he looked he saw her coming to him thro the young trees.

## THE LONG TRAIL

“She is not dead” he cried, “she is not dead.”

But the corpse at his feet was now icy cold.

Then he seemed to see her going thro a strange forest alone, and she was without weapons or food. He called to her, but she only shook her head and fell to the ground.

“She is starving” he cried.

But she staggered to her feet and went on. And now she was crossing an arid plain, but upon the other side were the fires of a strange

## THE PAGAN

tribe, and in the mouths of all the caves meat was hanging.

The people beckoned to her and called and she stretched out her arms to them, but it seemed impossible that she should reach them, so slowly she went and so wearily she dragged her feet.

But the vision went out, and the brook was loud in his ears.

“If she had had food” he said, “she might have reached that friendly tribe and

## THE LONG TRAIL

they would have given her a cave to rest in and cool water to drink."

As he spoke a young deer stepped into the brook with a clinking of hooves upon stones. Sunrise loosed an arrow, and the deer pierced thro the heart, fell shapelessly in the shallow water.

"She shall not go on this journey without food." Said Sunrise.

He cleaned the kill and then toiling till his back was like to break, he made a great excavation in the side

## THE PAGAN

of the gully, and therein he laid Dawn and the young deer.

Then he looked lovingly upon his faithful bow and his good arrows.

"It may be," he said at length, "that the journey is very long and the deer will not suffice."

And he opened Dawn's left hand and clasped it about the grip of the bow and in her right hand he laid the arrows.

## THE LONG TRAIL

“It may be,” he said, “that one day I shall follow on your trail again.”

Then he began to close the grave. But twice that he might look once more on Dawn he desisted and undid what he had done. When the work was finished, he turned slowly away.

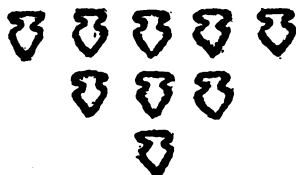
“Now I will go back to my people,” he said.

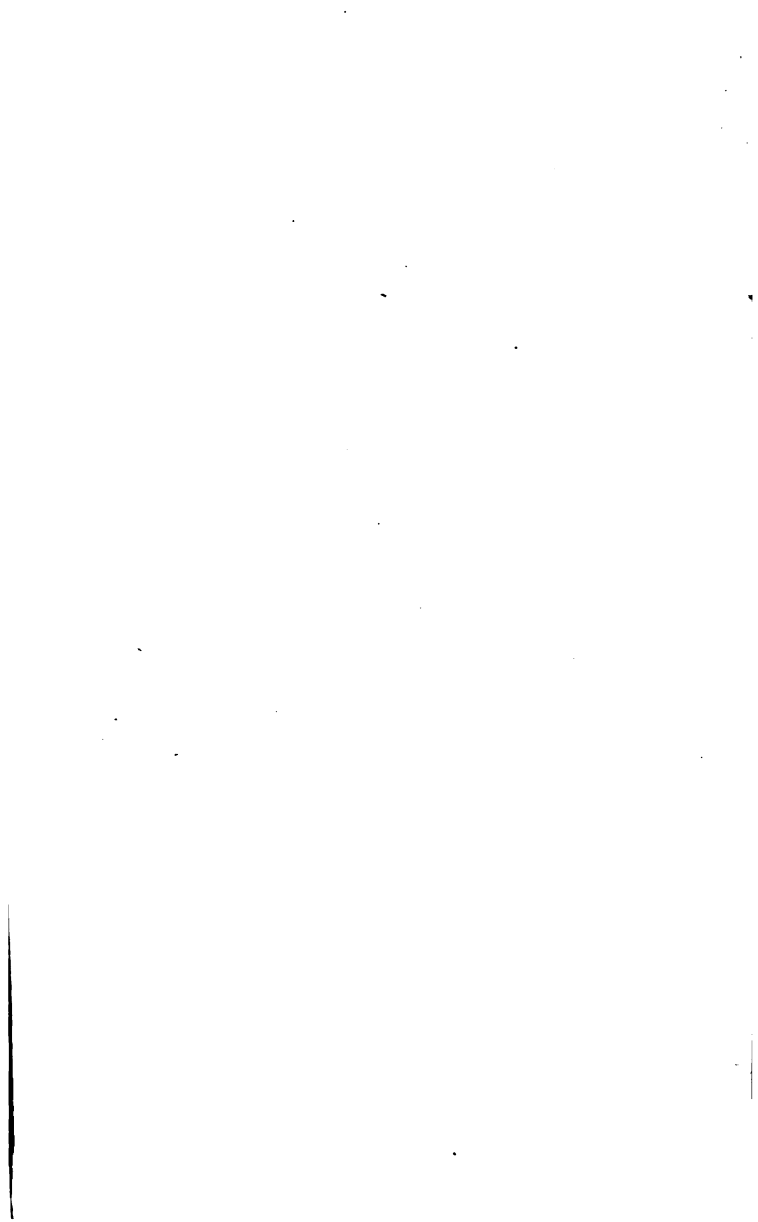
The fires of the tribe were days distant, and, without food or weapons, he was naked as he had come into the world. But he set his valiant

## THE PAGAN

feet upon the long trail. And  
as he went he kept finding her  
silent among the violets.

THE END





the way, but below the film of surface dust the rich earth comes up like great dollops of black butter.

Like a terrier I worry through the house again, one end of the tool-chest bumping against chairs and lintils, and down the steps of the front verandah. It tumbles into the hole with a great clashing of contents . . . . " . . . . in the deep-delved earth." If only one could dig a hole deep enough for everything!

Into the house aagin. A house that looks ridiculously doll-like against the mustering forces of catastrophe. I'm glad now that Jean isn't here. To hear of a death and to preside at the deathbed are two different things. This would hurt Jean. A woman is so much closer to elemental realities than a man is. And Heaven knows I find it hard enough. Rage and impotence give me silly thoughts, make me do silly things. I find myself looking into the ice chest. Jean's favourite milk jug stands there beside a dish of hard butter and the chops and peaches I brought home this morning. There's a meal we'll never eat.

Chairs we'll never again sit on. Floors we'll never walk on. Beds we'll never sleep in. Books we'll never read. Walls which, in a few minutes

. . . . .  
In a few minutes! To the devil with fiddling sentimentalities! Dashing to our own bedroom I spread a blanket on the floor and fling open the wardrobe door. On to the blanket go Jean's winter costume, a frock or two, my best suit and overcoat, hats. From the dressing-table a box containing Jean's trinkets . . . . she took so little with her. I'm sorry for that now, but up to a few minutes ago I'd welcomed it as evidence that she knew she'd be back soon. These little pink dance shoes, most of her cosmetics, the evening cloak I bought her only last birthday, the chiffon scarf, the silly little

vanity bag with its odour of lilac . . . she had no thought of enjoying herself. There's a lump in my throat as I pile them all in. It'll be a funny swag if any stranger happens to get hold of it! Finally the papers; a tin box full of love-letters and snapshots, and the big envelope marked "documents" from the sideboard drawer. Marriage lines, war bonds, testimonials, the deeds of the house. Rolling the whole lot into a firm bundle I buckle a luggage strap round it, carry it out to the front verandah, and go in to Mother Lil.

\* \* \* \*

She lay just as I'd left her, but her steady breathing and the set of her features betrayed that she was very much alert. No doubt she expected me to approach softly and rouse her with all the caution due to an old person sleeping. I did nothing of the kind.

"Come on, Lil!" I shouted, fetching her a solid wallop on the hips with the flat of my hand. "I'm going now. Get up!"

She gave a grossly exaggerated start and opened her eyes. Her lips moved in an incoherent gable: ". . . . . marrer?"

"Matter? The bloody house is on fire, that's all! Get moving . . . ."

"Let it burn. Are you trying to murder me? I was in a lovely sleep."

"You'll be in a lovely sleep all right if you don't get up! Here . . . ."

I seized the pillow, but she sunk her fingers into it and heaved over to one side. "Go away, Jim Thurgood . . . . you can't scare me."

Bending down I put my lips right at her ear. She smelled of biscuits and coconut oil. "Lil, all Beaumaris is burning. Everybody's gone except us. I'm not trying to frighten you."

Still with closed eyes, she pushed at me with a bony hand. "Don't shout at me. It goes through my head like a knife. Can't you leave me alone? I never did you any harm."

"If I leave you alone you'll die, you crazy bitch! Come on, up you get . . . I'm not going to have murder laid to my account."

Grabbing her by the shoulders I tried to drag her up, but she turned on her back and pulled at my arms with unexpected strength. When I shifted my grip to apply some sort of armlock she kicked, bringing her legs right up so that her skirts fell back, exposing a pair of black knickers and part of her blue-veined thighs. Her abominable imagination didn't miss even that. Craning her head forward so that she was bent almost double she surveyed her skinny shanks and actually spat at me.

"You dirty beast! Oh, you filthy beast! Wait till I see Jean!"

Holding her with one hand I grasped a corner of the sheet and tried to pull it over her. But she was too strong for me, and when I stumbled and fell on top of her, her sharp finger nails ripped down the side of my face. In my pain I staggered backwards and she wriggled over to the far side of the bed and crouched there, panting and glowering, and pulling down her disordered skirts as if I'd been trying to rape her.

Passing a hand across my face I brought it away covered with blood. "You're not a woman," I breathed, "you're a wild beast. Can't you see I'm trying to save you?"

"You're trying to murder me . . ."

I left her. There was nothing else to be done. She had to be got away one way or another, and where coaxing and coercion had failed I thought a bluff might succeed. She'd probably get out fast enough when she saw the fire coming and I was

no longer there to be tormented. Going out with her curses ringing in my ears I picked up the swag and set off down the garden path.

\* \* \* \*

It's almost a relief to get back to the brutal lucidity of the north wind. This, at least, is comprehensible; Mother Lil isn't. No play-acting here. Under the weight of the swag I go slowly, sucking in the hot air in long painful inhalations. I try to tell myself that this is a farewell, that I'll never come back; that Jean's house . . . perhaps Mother Lil also . . . is gone forever.

Voices hail me from a passing truck as I reach the road.

"There's Jim Thurgood!"

"Ho there, Jim!"

"Come on, you snifter!"

As the truck slows down I move impetuously forward. It's good to hear my name on the lips of normal people, to be caught up and carried along on the tide of ordinary life. The demoralising sense of loneliness lifts even as I step on to the running board. Eager hands reach down for the swag. Hard faces, smoke-blackened but familiar, smile down from behind the cabm.

"How did your place go, Jim?"

"Is this all you got out?"

"Where's the missus?"

I tell them, omitting all mention of Mother Lil.

They've been working all day on an outbreak near Dandenong; have come back in response to persistent calls for help nearer home. They tell me there are rumours of lost lives, that hundreds of soldiers have been brought up from Balcombe Camp, that nearly every fire brigade south of the Yarra, reinforced by men from Eastern Hill, is engaged along Beach Road. That only a miracle can save anything of Beaumaris.

On the sea-front only explosions are lacking to make the scene one of war. Other trucks, filled with soldiers, are moving in with us from the south. Against us goes the retreat, every kind of vehicle from a cart to a Mercedes car, piled with household goods or crowded with women and children. All along the road volunteers are helping residents to bring their possessions outside. Tables, chairs, beds, bric-a-brac, make of the gutter one tumbled furniture mart. They toil seriously, without commotion. No tears, no curses, no futile rushing about. All this should never have happened, but over the ruins of official incompetence the courage and selflessness of The People asserts itself, as it always will. Class alignments fall away in the face of an enemy which shows no social discrimination. Tomorrow, stark chimney stacks and gutted walls will mark the sites of these magnificent villas and mansions; today, humble men stagger through their doorways under the weight of valuable furnishings. It doesn't seem to occur to them that in no other conceivable circumstances would they ever have been welcomed across these polished thresholds. Down the steps of one lovely place a grey-headed old lady feverishly directs five men bearing a grand piano. In the garden of another a bespectacled student gathers up armfuls of books from the lawn and carries them out to a waiting car.

Over the din of wind, fire, and traffic, the voice of Authority goes up as a police car, equipped with loud speaker, cruises slowly by.

"All vehicles not actually engaged in fire-fighting must move south immediately. All vehicles . . ."

People pause to stare for a moment, some apprehensively, some resentfully. A taxi going in the wrong direction is turned back.

My mates keep shooting questions at me, but I'm not listening. Only part of me is here. Try

as I will I cannot enter into their communal spirit of endeavour. I've left something behind, and I know that sooner or later I must go back for it. These fellows know I've had to abandon my house, but they don't know there's someone in it. I feel guilty.

We haven't yet reached the face of the Black Rock fire but all the country deep at the back of Beach Road is burning fiercely. Whether or not Mervin Road has been crossed I cannot tell. Every dusty side-street belches fugitives and gives glimpses of figures toiling as in an inferno . . . chopping and slashing, and dragging burdens. Out of one street comes a string of cows with great swinging udders. There's smoke both ways, but the leading animal turns unerringly south, creating confusion amongst the moving cars. Rabbits abound, zig-zagging across the road in absurd sidelong leaps. They give an odd impression of having been thrown across. On the white fence bounding the seaward side stands a gaunt grey-beard, one hand clutching an overhanging branch.

"Retribution! Retribution!" he shouts. "The wrath of the Lord has fallen upon the infidel!"

Against the seething sky he makes an arresting picture, but nobody gives him a second glance. We all know him. His own wretched gunyah, deep in the scrub, must have been one of the first to fall before the wrath of the Lord.

And now, round a bend in the road, is the rim of destruction itself. Maroubra Street, its northern side the traditional preserve of the mighty. Evans, stockbroker, on the corner. Then, going back towards the scrub, Jude the building contractor, Senator Whitfield, Archer the barrister, Thoms the wine merchant, and Murchison the pastoralist. The last three houses have already gone; not even their ruins can be seen beyond the raging pyre which was Whitfield's two-storied mansion. Even as we

arrive the roof and dividing floor crash in with a prolonged rattle of tiles and furnishings. Hard behind the upflung cloud of glowing debris a cauldron of smokeless flames roars from the jagged shell. Red tongues flicker from holes that were windows.

All these places are fairly close together, with deep half-wild gardens running south. Through the last of these now skirmishes the advance guard of the fire, rioting in neglected corners and dying with long weary sizzles amongst the juicy branches of camphors and coprosmas. Sap boils on the limbs of Whitfield's magnolias.

I keep thinking of my own little house as I last saw it. Jean's house. Flames haven't yet reached it, if I am to believe a remark overheard in the truck a minute ago. But it will be a fearsome place now with Mother Lil prowling through it like a trapped animal. It would be interesting to see how she behaves without an audience. Very likely she'll keep going to the front verandah to see if I'm coming back. And when there's no sign of me she'll scuttle through to the back verandah to watch the mounting smoke. I can imagine all her senile fidgets, follow quite a few of the meanderings of her wayward mind. She'll keep pushing back her straggling hair, with never a thought of securing it in place. Fevered with indecision she'll wander from room to room, aimlessly moving small pieces of furniture and knick-knacks, opening and closing doors, messing about with blinds and light switches. Now and then she'll stand still for a minute, fingering her lips, eyes cunningly cocked to one side, wondering whether the game is worth playing any longer. All her mental resources will be concentrated not on the question of how long the fire will take to reach her, but on whether I was in earnest when I said I would not return. Nevertheless the fire